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NEW STATESMAN
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- The comeback of corporatism
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NEWS ON SUNDAY
The left-wing Sun fails to rise

OPENING THE BOX

The Liberals look for allies

'Some way has to be found to harness the idealism of the hundreds of thousands of intellectual radicals who are scattered across the Labour, Liberal and Social Democratic parties'

Cover photo: Rex Features

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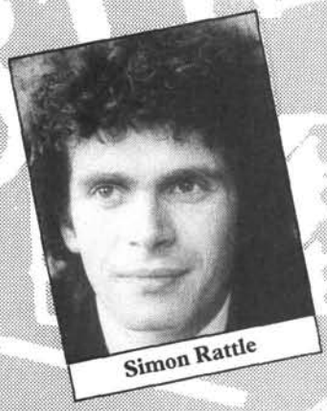
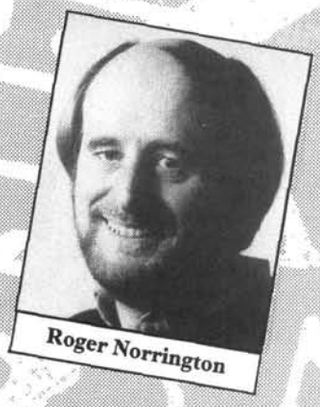
Giuseppe Sinopoli


Simon Rattle


Roger Norrington

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol 113 No 2935 26 June 1987

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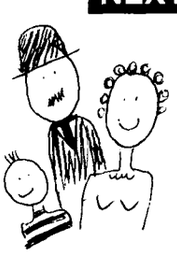
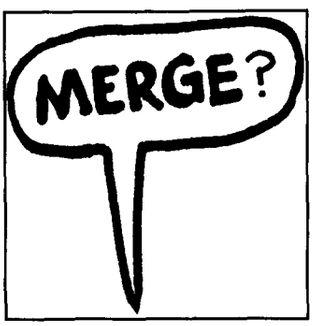


Barefoot psychotherapy: trying to rescue the family; local government: the party's long since over, but the bills can't be paid; a sensible economics for Labour; the British state's four modernisations

Where's the principles?



GOVERNMENTS win elections when opposition is fragmented. In Australia, Bob Hawke's Labor government is thought to be a sure winner in next week's polls — after two years' hard pounding on the economic front — because the Liberal and Nationalist parties have wholly failed to maintain a common oppositional front.

In Britain, the same was true in reverse. The Conservative government can appear so dominating at home and abroad (see Steven Erlanger, p18) because its opposition was and remains hopelessly split. It will not be sewn together quickly. But the process will have to be attempted sooner or later: and at the start of such a quest, we should first be clear what the various parties of opposition represent.

The *Liberals* carry a great deal of historical baggage, but can usually wear it lightly. Under Jeremy Thorpe and still more under David Steel, the party has been able to present itself as a centre-left force which has accepted and which defends most of the collectivist gains made by the Labour Party. Not surprisingly: it was the pre-first world war Liberal governments which laid their foundations. It is pretty footloose ideologically: its pitch in its just-secured seat in North-East Fife differed sharply from that in still-secure Bermondsey: and both Tory and Labour candidates express horror at its ruthlessness in the hustings. Its radical wing is largely unilateralist, community-based and at its most radical close to the kind of politics espoused by Ken Livingstone: its leadership is social democratic.

It is one of the ironies of British political nomenclature that the party which bears the name of *Social Democrats* has a leadership, or at least a leader, who is less securely in that tradition than the Liberals. David Owen apart, however, the SDP — as many of its founders have been at pains to point out: see p9 — has no differences in principle with Liberal Party policy, though many with Liberal Party practice and the Liberal radicals. Further, the differences between Owen and the other leading people in the Alliance are probably exaggerated: Owen's admiration for the Prime Minister is unusual for being voiced, but is not unique in opposition politics: and it is simply not certain whether he inclines more to Conservatism or to social democracy. Most of his party became social democrats because that is what they felt they were: and Douglas Hurd's wooing of them earlier this week is unlikely to have much effect.

Labour's church remains broad, but the seating arrangements have become a littler clearer. A 'hard' right, of the kind once represented by George Brown and Robert Mellish — schooled in trade union battles against communism — no longer exists except in echoes. The right is now 'soft': quite prepared to be led by Neil Kinnock, to dilute or even drop multilateralism, to adopt liberal, even libertarian positions on social policy. Roy Hattersley, who has been the right's leading member without ever being its leader, has taken up positions in his recent book, *Choose Freedom*, on economic and social policy at least as far as to the left as any adopted by Neil Kinnock.

The soft left's leading people have travelled such a distance from the Bennite positions many of them once enthusiastically held as to be largely indistinguishable from the right. Few now make any serious claims for the effectiveness of public ownership. Few are very keen on increased trade union power. Many are now wondering about defence. Most hate 'The Trots' (capable of a wide definition, to include most of the London Labour Party) with the fervour of the recent convert. Those with local government backgrounds are keener on local government's autonomy and right to extra cash than soft left parliamentarians like Jack Straw. But — defence perhaps apart, and then only in some cases — the differences of principle are hard to find, and getting harder.

The hard left is a different matter. There, figures like Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and Dennis Skinner have a real belief in public ownership, in trade union power and in a system of government which is recognisably and fully socialist. Their new colleagues, notably Livingstone and perhaps others like Joan Ruddock, are probably less keen on the state but more keen on a vision of Labour as a coalition of the oppressed and the protesting.

The break of principle in non-Conservative party politics appears to be between the 'hard' left and the rest. As Peter Kellner put it, longingly, in last week's *NS* (19 June): 'If Neil Kinnock, John Smith, David Steel and Paddy Ashdown were to sit down together with some bottles of good wine for a long summer afternoon in the hills of Tuscany, there is much they would agree on.'

That does not mean, over cups of coffee in a drizzling London June, they will agree on anything at all — or would at any other time. But they should give it a shot, and in doing so they will *have* to go beyond party interest. That is a tremendously difficult task, especially for party politicians — who are the only people who can perform it. But the opposition cannot afford to remain divided where real principles do not prevent attempts at making some common cause.

John Lloyd

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DIARY

I hitched a ride with a man in a car. I was rushing for the Eastbourne train when he pulled up at the kerb to ask directions. It was 9.20 in the morning. He had been looking for Grays Inn Road, he said, since 7.30 am. We were three, four, minutes from his destination, I told him. Would he take me to mine which was sort of on the way? He seemed a nice young man, from Peterborough. Dark-haired, dark-eyed, with a briefcase, a jacket, and a tie. He had an easy smile, sweet, as open and inviting, as likeable, as was the handsome Yorkshire Ripper's. En route, he asked, 'Do I look like the sort you can safely ride with?' He did. But I didn't tell him. I don't want to corrupt young manhood.

○

Eastbourne is well-to-do Thatcher country. In a charity shop near the station, I bought six Babycham glasses at 30 pence a go. A friendly dowager wrapped them carefully in 'the monthly paper for the young at heart', a tabloid called *Yours*. She commented politely on the glowering sky, and hoped, in a well-accented voice, that I would 'have a nice day'. And so I wended my way to Devonshire Park, to the Eastbourne ladies tennis championships.

Eastbourne didn't besiege you with bowls of fresh strawberries. There were no roving Becker groupies; no buzzing, burrowing crowds. But Eastbourne bore a distinct resemblance to Wimbledon, the cordial, tea-sipping Wimbledon of the mild-mannered past. Green stands and grass courts and serenity. Ivy climbing politely up the club-house wall. The channel and an old-fashioned, elegant English pier are just ten-minutes' walk away from Devonshire Park, where tennis has been played since 1870. The tennis crowd at these women-only championships is mostly female, of the sort who play a bit themselves, and whose tennis talk lingers on Anne Hobbs' and Angela Mortimer's finest moments.

Only the Chelsea College ball girls have difficult opinions. They will tell you that fiery Hana Mandlikova stalks up and down the court when she first comes on, a territorial tic; but is sweet. I didn't find her so myself. But at Wimbledon when she ran into a ball boy, she embraced him. Navratilova, whom they think beautiful, very rarely will accept new balls from the net; you have to send them down to the end. And one player it can be hell to ball girl for is Annabel Croft, the English Rose.

Eastbourne immediately precedes Wimbledon on the calendar and is played on grass, so it is still the most important solely-women's championship in Europe, a breathing, perspiring Wimbledon form guide. Martina Navratilova, who, until this year's (prophetic?) defeat, has won here and then there since 1982, regards Eastbourne as her own totem, a rabbit's foot in stadium form. Last year, I'd besieged Navratilova with a non-question or two. Every sportswriter besieges her; it's our job, as it is hers to make quotable non-answers. This year, I was besieging someone else.

When I bumped into Navratilova, striding in bright pink warm-up pants past the press tent, I simply said hello. She looked warily at the press badge on my sweater, and when she realised I was not going to stop to talk, she very nearly smiled, and said hello back.

To the players, not to put too fine a point on it, one is a pariah. But as they cannot entirely shun us, one becomes an occupational hazard.

○

A lithe but pale Chris Evert, in good form, was dispatching someone or other mercilessly. Dire defeat for whomever. Simply grist to eventually make flour on Evert's creakily churning Wimbledon mill. Her personal life, now that the divorce has happened, is taking a turn for the better. There is, as they say, a new man in her life.

The boyfriend, filmstar leggy, was there watching the match. He slouched elegantly, with his be-denimed legs hanging over the box. He is, and he knows it, gorgeous. Dark hair, long, wavy enough to caress his ears, a Clint Eastwood chin, a face that would launch a thousand apple pies. He is an American Olympic skier, but there is something Continental in his manner, some suavity (it is my fantasy) he may have picked up in the Alps.

The match was continuing, Evert still winning, and as the players changed sides, I couldn't help saying to the woman beside me, a stranger, 'She sure has taste in men.' 'It has to be the money,' came the answer. 'If I had £15 million in the bank, I'd have a boy friend that looked like that too.'

Thus spake sisterhood.

○

The heiress apparent, Steffi Graf, kept to herself before Wimbledon, away from Eastbourne. But it was not because some people at the Women's International Tennis Association, the up-market players' union, which keeps a canny eye on the obscenely well paid image-stakes, had put it to her that she should get a new hair-do. No, Graf was just preparing in her own time in her own way. And they may be right about the hair-do. Not that it ought to matter. But when Martina starts losing regularly enough, if Steffi ain't careful, the tabloid media will select her as the new Beast. No one has any complaints about Steffi's backhand, although Gabriela Sabatini, the Argentinian who is Beauty, says she sees a chink in it.

If Steffi gets a new hair style, will they then advise a new nose? A pretty boyfriend (that's what made the media stop the Iron Maiden sniggers about Chris)? Will they suggest that she wear mascara on court? It will be interesting to see if Steffi does get packaged for the sponsors. Will her words start coming out frozen, pre-pared. And when she really starts winning, when she becomes the best, will she become the player the sportswriters most love to hate? This is a syndrome that doesn't happen to men. There were always admirers of Superbrat. Even those who criticised him deplored what he did — not who he was or what he looked like. Nothing about John McEnroe came near to Auberon Waugh's erroneous and bigoted remarks last Wimbledom about Martina. I wish I could punch him in the nose. But I dare not. He is bigger than me.

Martina is the Mrs Thatcher of tennis. Her detractors make disgusting sexist remarks. They ought to chide Thatcher for her policies, not her manner. Not her womanhood. It makes one want to come to her defence. But I dare say Mrs Thatcher can take care of herself; the problem is she isn't taking care of the rest of us. Martina is the Maggie of tennis too, because even those who dislike her know that she is a master player of her game.

Adrianne Blue

Adrianne Blue is a freelance journalist who writes about sport for the Sunday Times

ROGER WODDIS

The Queen's breach

The House was hushed to hear the Queen,
Black Rod had struck the door,
And then there followed such a scene
As none had known before.
For what she wore was not a gown,
But country tweed instead,
And, having junked her costly crown,
A kerchief on her head.

'I'm cheesed off with this carry-on,
I groan when duty calls,
And as they say at Wimbledon,
It's all a load of balls.'
She laid aside her formal script,
Her speech was penny-plain:
'I think my Government,' she quipped,
'Has water on the brain.'

And so she broke with protocol;
The Members were in shock,
Until she mentioned alcohol
And drinking round the clock.
And when she said, 'Unless I'm wrong,
This House — the Speaker, too —
Will soon be pissed the whole day long,'
They laughed, 'What else is new?'

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What takeover?

'LABOUR'S left takes over', announced the *Sunday Times* the weekend after the election, reporting its conclusion that over a quarter of the new Parliamentary Labour Party is 'hard left'. A likely story.

It is true that retiring and deselected Labour MPs have tended to be on the right, and that their replacements and the winners of Labour's new seats tend to be more left-wing. But the new left-wing MPs are overwhelmingly Kinnockite: they are overwhelmingly pragmatic 'soft' lefties and fairly-whelmingly Scottish.

And the really striking thing about the new Parliamentary Labour Party is that the real 'hard left' is no stronger after this general election than after the last one. Unlike the *Sunday Times*, we are able to back this up with evidence.

In 1983, 29 of the 209 Labour MPs voted for Eric Heffer, the uncompromising left-winger, in the party's leadership election. Now, only 33 of the new 229-strong parliamentary party are comparably 'hard left'. To the 24 surviving Heffer-voters should be added Tony Benn, who wasn't in parliament in 1983, and Max Madden, who is standing as the 'hard left' candidate for parliamentary party chair. Martin Flannery, who voted for Heffer in 1983, should be substracted from the 'hard left' as he has left the Campaign Group — formed to carry the torch of true Bennism when the Tribune Group went 'soft'.

Of Labour's new intake of 69, only eight are apparently hard left: Diane Abbott (Hackney North), Paul Boateng (Brent South), Bob Cryer (Bradford South), Mildred Gordon (Bow and Poplar), Bernie Grant (Tottenham), Chris Mullin (Sunderland South), Pat Wall (Bradford North) and Audrey Wise (Preston). And at least three of them are likely in practice to be more flexible after the election than before.

Ken Livingstone is impossible to classify, treading a fine line between soft and hard lefts. But he is still viewed with distaste on the hard left because he wouldn't defy the law by refusing to set a rate for the GLC in March 1985. Along with George Galloway (War on Want, conqueror of Roy Jenkins), Joan Ruddock (ex-CND figurehead), Dawn Primarolo (unseater of Michael Cocks in Bristol South) and Graham Allen (organiser of trade union political fund ballots), Livingstone is signing up with both the soft-left Tribune and 'hard-left' Campaign groups.

The overlap between the two groups has been an uncomfortable and yet populous place in the last parliament, enabling a dozen MPs like Michael Meacher and Clare Short to be loyal to Kinnock while retaining their left-wing credentials with activists in the constituencies.

If we classify as right-wingers those who voted for Healey for deputy leader in 1981 (against Tony Benn) or Peter Shore or Roy Hattersley for leader in 1983, then the Parliamentary Labour Party looks like this (assuming that those in the new intake whose views are not known are similar to those whose views are known).

	Old PLP	New PLP
Right	87	75
Soft left	91	121
Hard left	29	33

The shift to the soft left is likely to have consequences for the election of Labour's 15-strong shadow cabinet. Nominations close on 2 July and the result of the ballot of Labour MPs will be announced on 8 July. If the soft left votes as a bloc, it could sweep the board; but there are always other loyalties and strong votes for competent incumbents.

Because the Tribune and Campaign groups failed to agree on a joint slate last year, only five of the present shadow cabinet (excluding the party leader and his deputy) are left-wingers, and one of them, defence spokesperson Denzil Davies, has never been on an organised slate. He shot from 13th place to 3rd last year because he appeared on *Weekend World* a few days before and, according to one right-wing MP, 'absolutely wiped the floor with Matthew Parris' who was presenting the programme for the first time. 'That sort of thing impresses our people.'

Even if the Tribune and Campaign groups fail to draw up a joint slate this week, the Tribune slate is bound to gain ground against the right-wing slate organised by the Solidarity faction. Denzil Davies will be lucky to keep his place in the shadow cabinet, as will be Solidarity's Barry Jones, Peter Archer, Giles Radice and David Clark. Able and popular leftwingers queuing up to take these five possible seats include Robin Cook, Kinnock's leadership campaign manager who dropped out of the shadow cabinet by just two votes last year, Bob Hughes, Frank Dobson, Jack Straw and Jo Richardson.

The unpredictable factors are the Scottish bias in the new parliamentary party — 20 of the 69 new faces are from Scots constituencies — and the possible retirement of Denis Healey. What is predictable is that campaign organiser Bryan Gould will top the poll, knocking shadow Home Secretary Gerald Kaufman off the perch he has occupied for several years. Gould was elected to the shadow cabinet for the first time last year, coming 14th in the ballot.

● The realignment of the left outside parliament proceeds apace, as various groups try to come to terms with Labour's third consecutive defeat. Soft left Labour Co-ordinating Committee is holding a conference in London on 4 July called 'Labour's Renewal — the next stage'. The Socialist Philosophers' Group meets over the weekend of July 4-5 in Twickenham, and the SDP's Tawney Society confers at the same time in Oxford. The elite Fabian Society is holding an invitation-only conference on 10 July called 'Out of the Redoubt'. As a spokesperson said, 'Labour will have to start winning elections, or else we'll run out of titles for post-mortem conferences.'

John Rentoul

Nobody's man

IF PAUL Volcker was a larger-than-life figure in the United States, he was a demi-god in Europe and Asia: a skilled sorcerer who had cured the American inflation that threatened the world economy. It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that his resignation from the Federal Reserve Board rocked the money markets.

In place of the Carter-appointed Democrat Volcker, who Chief of Staff Donald Regan loved to hate, President Reagan has appointed Alan Greenspan. Greenspan is a partisan Republican with extensive political experience who served two Republican presidents. Will a Greenspan-led Fed be more likely to help Republicans trying to win the White House in 1988, and in the process unloose again an inflation so painfully caged?

Every American president has wanted his 'own' chair of the Fed, the world's most powerful central bank and the only game in town for managing the American economy. Reagan is no exception. But Greenspan is no greenhorn, and he has had the benefit of watching two other Fed chairs wobble on the difficult tightrope of this, Washington's second most powerful position.

Greenspan is a pragmatic and savvy politician with close ties and strong support from the two Bakers, Chief of Staff Howard and James at the Treasury, and he has the confidence of Wall Street. Reagan has undoubtedly also won a stronger supporter for the administration's efforts to deregulate the American banking industry, for which the Treasury Department has been campaigning and against which Volcker consistently fought.

The Fed's most important constituent is the President, for it is the President who bears the most direct electoral responsibility for the state of the economy. However, the American Constitution gives the monetary power to Congress and the Congress has in turn delegated it to the Fed. The institution's much-vauned independence could be altered — or ended — at any time if Congress were sufficiently piqued.

Furthermore, the Fed needs the confidence of American consumers and investors, and increasingly of the international financial markets, in its bid also to create confident *expectations* about the future state of the economy.

In 1972, many observers believed that Fed

YOUR VIEWS ON THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT

The Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 expires in March 1989. The Home Secretary, the Rt Hon Douglas Hurd CBE MP, has asked Lord Colville, QC, to undertake a general review of the operation of the Act.

This review will be based on the assumption that there is a continuing need for legislation against terrorism. It will assess the operation and effectiveness of the Act and its impact on civil liberties. The report will be published.

Lord Colville would like to receive written observations from individuals or organisations who have views on the Prevention of Terrorism legislation. These views should be sent to him by *31 July 1987* at the address below:

Room 14, Hepburn House,
Marsham Street,
London SW1 4HW

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chairman Arthur Burns was working closely with his old ally, Richard Nixon, to pump up the economy to ensure Nixon's re-election. Burns, in fact, was trying to restrain the economy's growth in direct opposition to the President's pleas: Nixon was furious.

Greenspan has learned the lessons that Burns taught him at Colombia University and Volcker confirmed: that no Fed chairman can afford to politicise the chairmanship or the Fed by taking a partisan stand. As Greenspan put it in a recent interview, 'You have no choice as a member of the Fed but to defend the institution. You have to. That's priority number one.'

For Greenspan that will, by necessity, mean demonstrating that he is not 'Reagan's man' in the Fed. Independence from political assault is both the Fed's shield and the source of its great power. He will, however, be a politician: a leader who seeks to instill confidence and build political support for his view of the right policy. And he will be judged on how he handles his first, inevitable crisis.

Donald F. Kettl

Donald F. Kettl is author of Leadership at the Fed, *published by Yale University Press.*

If the caption fits

No 23

As your contribution to the post-election analyses, put a caption to the above photo from Mrs Denis Thatcher's Finchley election address. Thanks to Jimmy Fisher for drawing our attention to it. Entries to reach us by Monday 6 July for publication on 10 July: a £10 book token awaits.

No 21: winner

Di: 'Where can I dump this disgusting bit of pâté?' *(John Marriott, Folkestone.)* Hon. mensh: Guinness (thinks): 'Good God. A royal whitlow.' *(Chas. F. Garvey, Peacehaven, East Sussex.)*

The real housing crisis

THE GAP between house prices in one nation (the South East) and the other (the North, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) goes on widening. The average price of houses and flats in London was over £60,000 in the first quarter of this year, figures published by the Building Societies Association last week suggest.

The increase in the past year was steepest in London — 24 per cent — and slowest in Northern Ireland — 6 per cent. The price of the average house in the North of England rose by 9 per cent to £25,523, just two-fifths of the London average.

The North-South divide in house prices really started to open up in 1982, when Northern houses were worth three-fifths of the London average. Since 1982 average London house prices have gone up by two-thirds more than the rate of inflation. Taking account of the dip in real house prices in 1980-81, London values have gone up by a half in real terms under the Thatcher government; house prices in the South East excluding London have gone up by a third in real terms; prices in the North have gone up by just 2 per cent; and in Northern Ireland they have fallen by 17 per cent.

Average house prices

Real change since 1979

London	£59,613	+47%
Rest of South East	£51,936	+34%
South West	£41,329	+24%
East Anglia	£36,344	+25%
East Midlands	£29,577	+21%
North West	£28,820	+6%
West Midlands	£28,703	−3%
Northern Ireland	£27,870	−17%
Scotland	£27,080	+4%
Wales	£26,776	+8%
Yorks and Humber	£25,576	+11%
Northern England	£25,523	+2%

The above table shows the crude averages of the prices of houses bought with building society mortgages. Prices are actually higher because expensive houses have increasingly been mortgaged by banks competing for building society business. The change in house prices in the second column has been adjusted by Environment Department number-crunchers to take account of this effect, and also the effect of cheaper ex-council houses flooding onto the market since 1979. If the mix of houses mortgaged to building societies had stayed the same as in 1979, the average price of London houses would have been just under £66,000 in the first quarter of 1987.

John Rentoul

NEWSTATESPERSON

A sister for Mrs T

ANOTHER small cold island on the edge of Europe looks set to elect a woman leader for a third term next year.

Like Mrs Thatcher, Iceland's President Vigdis Finnbogadottir is tough — she fought to adopt a child as a single parent after her divorce — and she's used to success in the thin air at the top of male-dominated worlds: she was the first woman to be director of the Reykjavik Theatre Company.

There the similarity begins and ends. Not only is Finnbogadottir concerned with the lot of the women who come after her; in these days of prominent 'I'm not a feminist but . . .' women, she stands out. 'You *will* call me a feminist, won't you?', she reminds the interviewer.

On the day of a women's strike in 1975 Finnbogadottir protested with her three-year-old daughter near the president's office. Five years later she moved into his seat after a hard-fought campaign in which she beat three male candidates. She has since emerged as the uncontested and well-loved figurehead of this small republic. No one ran against her when she stood for re-election in 1984 and a third term seems likely.

After the 1975 strike when nearly 90 per cent of Reykjavik's 60,000 women came out to demand recognition for 'women's contribution to the community', abortion laws were liberalised and women were granted three months' maternity leave. Yet in spite of a feminist president, women still form the lowest-paid group in Iceland.

Disillusioned with the lack of impetus in the left-of-centre People's Alliance, women formed their own alternative list in March 1983. Elections this year saw the Women's Alliance double their seats in the Althing (parliament) to six and their percentage of the vote to 10.1, seriously jolting the People's Alliance. Holding the balance of power, the Women's Alliance could afford to join a coalition on its own terms.

People's Alliance MPs are predictably scornful, complaining the women's list 'acts like a pressure group', which the women don't deny. What they are at pains to prove is that they are capable of holding ministerial posts and they see women's issues as everything which affects them — from health, housing, education and employment to disarmament and the environment. Their nearest equivalent is the German Greens; like them they have a decentralised structure, consensus decision-making and rotating deputies.

As the tetchy relationship between the two left Alliances develops, Finnbogadottir, as a non-party politician, can choose to stay safely aloof. Instead, she risks defending the Women's Alliance. Describing its members as 'strong and realistic', she dismisses critics. 'They are new and different.'

Her own long-term solution is to advise women the world over: 'Get educated, get educated, get educated. Never accept a shorter education than your brothers.' In the meantime, she doesn't forget that once she was on the streets protesting. In the 1985 women's strike, ten years on, she threatened to exercise her veto on legislation ordering striking air hostesses to resume work.

Atul Chandra

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PETER KELLNER

The Liberal/SDP Alliance: An obituary

THE LIBERAL/SDP Alliance, whose death after a long illness is announced on page one, never fulfilled its early promise. As a child prodigy it displayed phenomenal potential; but throughout its life it was wrecked by a series of identity crises. Increasingly these impeded its ability to prosper in the world of adult politics. A heart attack claimed the Alliance's life just short of its sixth birthday.

The Alliance was born in September 1981. Its father, the Liberal Party, had entered late middle age as a confirmed bachelor of limited means. Early in 1981, it became infatuated by a young widow who had recently divorced the Labour Party and had changed her name by deed poll to the Social Democrats. Following a whirlwind romance during the spring and summer of that year, their engagement was announced in July 1981 by David Steel, on behalf of the Liberals and Shirley Williams for the SDP.

It later transpired that Steel had always wanted political progeny, and that its name should be 'Alliance'. But the SDP dithered. When Steel suggested that their engagement announcement should be called 'A new Alliance for Britain', Williams demurred. She told Steel she would have to consult her other SDP midwives, Roy Jenkins, David Owen and William Rodgers. Steel feared that delay would dissipate enthusiasm for the marriage. He wanted the engagement announced as soon as possible. So he agreed to the blander title, 'A fresh start for Britain'.

As soon as the couple were engaged, they started living together, to the irritation of many members of the Liberal family. Public opinion was won over, however, when the SDP's Roy Jenkins represented both families at the Warrington by-election. To the consternation of many he almost won. No matter that the opinion polls showed that many people who voted for Jenkins knew little of what the SDP stood for: the new party was A Good Thing.

That summer and autumn of 1981 can be seen, in retrospect, to have given the Liberals and SDP a false sense of hope. Their main rivals for public affection were having a bad time. The Labour family looked as if it might break up, while the Conservatives were placing family harmony at risk with policies that caused massive youth unemployment. When the Liberals met for a grand family gathering at Llandudno they thought that by marrying the SDP and giving birth to the Alliance, their offspring would sweep all before it. They hoped the prospect of power would dissolve all quarrels between the two sets of in-laws. How wrong they were.

AT THE ROOT of the Alliance's troubles, from its earliest weeks, was the refusal of both parents to let it lead a life of its own. Whenever voters wanted to make gifts of their membership subscriptions to the young child, they could not mark their presents 'To the Alliance, with love'; they had to choose whether to favour the Liberal or SDP side of the family.

It was a recipe for disagreement. At the marriage of the Liberals and the SDP, the partners could not agree on which family provided the greater dowry. The Liberals claimed more members, money and local councillors. The SDP claimed more MPs (26 had defected from the Labour Party and one from the Conservatives) and more experience of government.

Then there were the families' different rituals. The older Liberal Party had grown accustomed to consulting widely before reaching a decision. It made little difference, as everyone knew that the Leader had the final say on everything that mattered; but it made local Liberals feel wanted. The Social Democrats, on the other hand, decided things at the top and then told their members what had been agreed.

Matters first came to a head in December 1981. As so often with newly-wed couples, Christmas provided the occasion for the first blazing row between their two families. It started at the Station Hotel, Chesterfield. Members of the two families were discussing which side should be represented in each of Derbyshire's ten constituencies at the next general election. Bill Rodgers led for the SDP, Viv Bingham (a former party president) for the Liberals.

> ***'The Alliance was doomed to suffer the fate of a tug-of-love baby. It never had its own birthday parties'***

They thought they had reached a deal. The trouble was that the two sides differed about the status of the deal they had struck. Rodgers thought they had reached a binding agreement, while Bingham believed it was just a *provisional* agreement that had to be put to each constituency Liberal Party for ratification.

For various arcane personality reasons, local Liberals wanted to fight Erewash, while the SDP fought Amber Valley; the Station Hotel meeting proposed the opposite. The point, however, was that Rodgers thought the Liberals were up to sundry devious tricks, and suspended all negotiations over seat allocations — news that soon leaked to the press and led to the first public squabble over parental rights to the Alliance.

In the end, most of the battles over constituency representation were settled, either locally or between Steel and Jenkins (who was elected leader of the SDP in July 1982). From then until the 1983 general election, relations between the two sets of in-laws were generally calm, not least because Steel and Jenkins got on so well.

Their only serious tiff came during the 1983 election campaign. The Alliance was almost two years old, and precocious enough to offer itself as Britain's government. But lacking an independent personality, somebody from one side of the family or the other had to be put forward as 'Prime Minister-designate'. Steel happily conceded that title to the older Jenkins; however when their campaign appeared to be faltering, Steel met Jenkins for a family council of war at Ettrick Bridge. The outcome: Jenkins kept his 'title' while Steel was given greater prominence for the rest of the campaign.

AT FIRST SIGHT the Alliance achieved a glorious result: 26 per cent of the vote, just two points less than Labour. It might not come into its inheritance immediately, but time was surely on its side.

Not so. Jenkins resigned as leader of the SDP directly after the election; in the absence of competition, Owen was declared head of the family. He was the same age as Steel, but this proved to be more of a handicap than an advantage. Where Jenkins had related to Steel like a benevolent uncle-in-law, Owen behaved more like a rival brother-in-law.

The Alliance was doomed to suffer the fate of a tug-of-love baby. It never had its own birthday parties. Instead, each autumn, it had to visit different seaside resorts and take part in the celebrations of its separate parents and their families. It found this confusing, and so did many voters. On the one hand, Liberals and Social Democrats expressed their undying love for each other. On the other hand, they insisted on leading their own separate lives.

In different parts of the country, outlying members of the two families became frustrated by this simmering feud, and decided to come together regardless of what the heads of their families wanted. In Wales, the harmony was complete. In many places in England and Scotland, too, local Liberals and Social Democrats decided jointly on their choice of candidates to fight the next general election.

Dr Owen disliked this drift of events. In the summer of 1986 he vetoed the choice of defence school that a group from the two parties had decided that the Alliance should attend. The Liberals and most Social Democrats preferred a thoughtful, 'wait-and-see' education; Owen insisted on a rugged, outward-Euro-bound schooling.

One ruction led to another, and the child was kept at home while the families slogged it out. In January 1987, they announced all was well and held a party at the Barbican to show that the Alliance had come of age. The weakness of its heart was evident, however, and the strain of another general election campaign proved too much. On Sunday 14 June Mr Steel told the world that the Alliance had expired, and the Liberal family would lay claim to its worldly goods.

The Alliance's death will leave a void in the hearts of many dozens of enthusiastic supporters. A memoral service will be held at the Liberal Party assembly in September. The organisers hope that this will not be too solemn. The Alliance's epitaph will read: 'It seemed a good idea at the time'. No red roses, by request. □

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The first and future steps

WILLIAM WALLACE *says that the reason the Alliance parties do not merge rests 'primarily' on the SDP leadership's contempt for the Liberals as a party*

Political disagreements in all parties are shaped as much by differing memories and historical myths as by differences over future direction. That is as true for the Alliance, after six years, as it is for the longer-lived Labour and Conservative parties. After an election the protagonists do not start again with a *tabula rasa*. 'How did we get to here?' is an unavoidable preliminary to the question 'Where do we go from here?'.

There are several different versions of the Alliance's origins and early history. Its pre-history goes back to Roy Jenkins' Dimbleby Lecture, and to extensive but private contacts between David Steel and Roy Jenkins and a number of close supporters during the course of 1980. The option of a group of Labour MPs and notables joining the Liberal Party, under Jenkins' leadership, was actively canvassed. It was David Steel who counselled against this, overriding the misgivings of others. A separate party, contained with a broader alliance, would in his view attract a much larger group out of the Labour Party, and so move faster towards the strategic goal of a realignment of the left. Both for those around Jenkins and those around Steel this was clearly understood to be a transitional arrangement, in which the concessions the Liberals were persuaded to make to allow room for this new party were justified by the gains to be made by the creation of a new political movement.

Like everything else in politics, the creation of the Alliance was a bargain, from which both sides hoped to gain. It was seen by the Liberal leadership as offering to supply three crucial elements which the Liberal Party lacked: a stronger and more credible national leadership group, access to new sources of funds, and greater penetration of the traditional Labour vote. For the Jenkinsites, it offered in return a ready-made network of constituency activists, and a clear run against the two old parties in 300 constituencies.

A fresh start for Owen

There was, however, an alternative history from the outset. For David Owen and those closest to him the SDP was a new party, setting out on its own; reluctantly accepting the temporary necessity of an electoral pact with the Liberals, but confident that their command of the national media would displace the provincial Liberals and enable them to stand alone at the centre of the political stage. The launch of the SDP was predicated on the Liberal Party's willingness to accept an arrangement of mutual advantage with the new party. But the arguments behind the scenes in the SDP's first months foreshadowed later differences. In the first flash of the new party's successful launch, some of its leading members wanted to trample over the Liberals at once and destroy them as a political force. Only hours before Shirley Williams and David Steel launched the Alliance's first declaration, 'A Fresh Start for Britain', frantic phone calls were bringing Williams, Steel and Owen together to reconcile the most reluctant member of the Gang of Four to its contents, even to its title.

John Minnion suggests an answer on p.39

Few within either party were aware of these differences, or of their longer-term implications. There were bound to be problems of adjustment as the two groups came together: the SDP overwhelmingly from London and the South East in its initial membership, the Liberals largely from the other parts of Britain. But the assumption under which the Llandudno Assembly of

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September 1981 voted to accept an alliance with the infant SDP was that we were attempting to create a new political movement, bringing together the differing strands of the Liberal and Social Democratic traditions. The hard task I had expected to face in moving the resolution before 2,000 independently-minded Liberals was transformed by the warmth of the speeches which Roy Jenkins and Shirley Williams had made the previous eveing, setting out to win over the Liberal delegates to the common enterprise.

The 1983 election arrived before the two parties had entirely overcome unavoidable initial frictions. But by and large the bargain held, with Liberals in constituencies supplying many more of the workers on the ground, and the SDP featuring more prominently in the national campaign. Afterwards it was widely expected that the two parties would move closer together, to remove some of the most troublesome points of friction and to enable them to concentrate their efforts on winning over wavering voters. With David Steel exhausted and unwell, David Owen could have set out to woo Liberal MPs and activists and establish himself as leader of an integrated Alliance.

Instead, he deliberately stepped back, committing the SDP after a close-fought debate at its Salford conference to resist any further convergence between the two parties, and attacking as hell-bent on merger those who proposed such modest measures as joint candidate selection. The loss of the majority of the SDP's MPs had, it was true, altered the balance of the Alliance to their disadvantage. With a smaller and less experienced membership, and now a smaller party in the House of Commons as well, there was a natural fear of being swamped, and a determination to establish their own identity. Reluctantly, the Liberal leadership was persuaded to wait while the SDP devoted the best part of two years to independent debate and policy-making, holding the Liberals at arms length and resisting efforts to define Alliance strategy or policy priorities, let alone to put them across to the electorate.

The silly party

Owen later claimed that his determined action in pre-empting any convergence between the two parties had saved the SDP from extinction. His reasons were clear, and consistent with the attitude he had adopted in 1981, when — alone among the Gang of Four — he had stayed away from the Llandudno Liberal Assembly. He saw the Liberal Party as 'silly' and undisciplined, much like the constituency activists of the Labour Party he had left behind, and had pushed successfully for an SDP constitution far more centralised and subject to firm parliamentary control.

But there was a cost, and an underlying illusion, in his strategy. The cost was that it involved a determination to emphasise, even exaggerate, the differences between the Liberals and the SDP. The illusion was that the Liberals would accept whatever they were offered, unpaid footsoldiers in General Owen's army, to be cast off once the campaign was won. And the benefits were hard to see. The Alliance as an entity lost two years, from the summer of 1983 to 1985, giving the Labour Party time and opportunity to recover its position as the main alternative to the Conservatives. The search for an independent philosophy of social democracy failed. Contrary to current myth, no clear definition of the social market emerged, to be smothered later by woolly Liberals: the idea fluttered up and down within the SDP without being explored further. Most of the massive output of SDP policy-making during that period brought it closer to Liberal policy, not further away. Where divisions existed, they cut across the two parties rather than falling neatly between them. The case for separation thus came to rest, more and more heavily, on defence as the symbolic issue which set sound men off from sillies.

Looking back, the Alliance lost the 1987 election in those two wasted years, far more than in the last four weeks of the campaign itself. Much time and energy which should have been devoted to projecting the Alliance to the electorate was absorbed in repeated, and often gruelling, negotiations between the two parties; I spent over 50 hours in meetings on one of these negotiations alone. Worse, the semi-detached nature of the Alliance weakened both parties. The energies both of David Steel and of his party officers were directed towards trying to build the Alliance, leaving the Liberal Party without a coherent national leadership or a coherent parliamentary party. Disagreements within the SDP's National Committee degenerated into factionalism, with

> ***'The task for the Alliance, as for Labour, is a strategy for regaining power which rises above the sectarianism which disfigures British politics'***

David Owen as leader relying more and more on a small group of trusted supporters against those whom he mistrusted as over-sympathetic to the Alliance.

Intentionally or not, the relationship between a Liberal leader who was prepared to make compromises for the Alliance and an SDP leader who resisted compromise was transformed into the characterisations of 'Spitting Image'. David Steel found it no easier to manage a partner whose admiration for the Thatcher style of strong

Hard to swallow

DAVID STEEL's instant and unexpected post-electoral strike for merger has stimulated a rush of views from the Alliance camp on the issue: to date, the pro-merger faction have won the argument hands down. But so far, too, Dr David Owen has kept his own counsel.

The best argument for merger has been that the Liberal and the Social Democratic parties have no essential ideological or philosophical divide. Liberal President Des Wilson (*Guardian* 16 June, says that 'In "The Time has come" [the Alliance manifesto] we described the Alliance as the coming together of the two major reforming traditions in British politics — as a synthesis of our beliefs in individual freedom, pluralism, diversity with the desire for social reform and justice. We are both committed to enhancing the democratic process, to protecting individual rights in balance with the rule of law, to the redistribution of political, social and economic power, to being an internationalist party.'

Richard Holme, Alliance (Liberal) candidate for Cheltenham, writing in the next day's *Guardian*, noted 'an extraordinary degree of intellectual convergence among Liberals and Social Democrats'. David Steel, the Liberal leader (*Guardian* 20 June) wrote of 'the re-unification of the broad progressive traditions of centre-left British politics'. And William Rodgers, one of the SDP's gang of four, (*Observer* 21 June) claimed that he looked 'in vain for a significant ideological gap between the parties'.

All the pro-merger advocates agree on the need for one leader: even Shirley Williams — who takes a cautious middling position, (*Guardian* 19 June) arguing for union . . . but not just yet — says that the two Davids should 'agree to continue as deputy even if the other won [a leadership contest]'.

Many claim the members want it: Steel says that 'I am satisfied that the mainstream mood of our members is forward to union'; Rodgers writes that 'in practice convergence has already taken place except where it has been consciously restrained from the top'. They also broadly agree it should be centre-left. Holme, Steel's closest adviser, writes that 'to the extent that we have to accept the established classification system the Alliance is surely centre-left'.

Only one public voice has fought all of this unity talk: John Cartwright, Alliance (SDP) member for Woolwich and one of Owen's closest allies. In *his* contribution to the *Guardian* debate (18 June), he makes only two points against merger: that the Alliance must more sharply define its politics, and that to believe that 'the act of union will of itself somehow magically solve all our problems' is a chimera. Second, in direct contradiction to the other contributors, he says that — the pro-merger drive 'risks misjudging the mood of many rank and file Social Democrats . . . some people sacrificed safe seats and assured careers in the Labour Party to help create the SDP'.

Cartwright is a clever and experienced politician: the weakness of his arguments points to the evident fact that Owen and his supporters — who include all of the five-strong SDP in the Commons, and a good proportion, perhaps a majority, of the SDP's national committee — don't want to merge because they don't like or trust the Liberals, but are inhibited from saying so. The sharpest part of Cartwright's article was a side-swipe at the Liberals for passing a unilateralist defence policy at their Eastbourne conference last year. He writes: 'It may [may!] have been monstrously unfair to characterise the Liberal Party as a bunch of raving unilateralists but the myth had been firmly planted in the public consciousness . . .'

Those who know Owen well believe that this thinly hidden contempt is his; and that he is hugely reluctant to give up the separate party which he, more than any other member of the Gang of Four, worked to create. And he *did* work so hard: tramping round the country, initially meeting with halls full of jeering Labour supporters, nursing SDP branches into life, covering all the policy bases in radio and TV studios. It is not just vanity which keeps a man attached to that kind of sacrifice; not the easiest of decisions, on any grounds, to resign himself to being David Steel's deputy. It is a decision he may not be able to take.

John Lloyd

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leadership was becoming explicit, than had Jim Prior with the originator of the style.

We could have recouped, nevertheless, in the summer of 1985, and set out to prepare for the election and for a share in government on the basis of the convergence of approaches which the SDP's policy-making exercise had demonstrated. But once again the Owenites fought for delay, for maintaining their separate identity as a fourth party and — it was becoming increasingly clear — a separation of the two parties after electoral success. Negotiations on joint policy were finally permitted in the spring of 1986. A joint candidates' conference was allowed in July of that year, on the strict condition that no votes were to be taken, with final reluctant agreement on a joint team of spokesmen for the end of the year. When the election arrived the joint campaigning organisation was still not fully in place. No strategy for government had been agreed, no preparations for post-election negotiations undertaken. The strong leader had successfully retained his freedom of action, even vigorously reasserting it in the wake of the Joint Commission Report on Defence and Disarmament — provoking a brief revolt from the frustrated and weary Liberal troops. But the final cost was the credibilty of the Alliance and of its leadership which so weakened the 1987 campaign.

A new bargain

The rehearsal of this brief history is intended only as a guide to where we should go from here. The suggestion that we sould again devote the first 18 months after the election to redefinition of our separate identities is fanciful. That luxury was allowed last time, and brought little benefit to either. Federation as a concept conjures up another long process of adversary negotiations, emphasising the differences between the two parties rather than searching for the common ground. The argument within the SDP over continued separation from the Liberals has come to rest primarily upon the leadership's contempt for the Liberals as a party. But one cannot maintain a coalition without a degree of mutual respect between the partners, let alone create a broader political movement. The Franz-Josef Strauss approach to coalition politics, in which the co-operation of partners is accepted provided they recognise the superior intelligence and political dynamism of the great leader, is unlikely to appeal any more in British politics than it has in German.

The SDP has not brought to the Alliance the gains for which the Liberals originally hoped. But it has brought something else instead: the enthusiasm (and accumulating experience) of its 50,000 activists, almost all of them new to party politics, and the high quality of its candidates. After the setback of 1987, there is a risk that many of them may slip away. The basis for a new bargain lies in harnessing their energies alongside those of the Liberals with whom they already work, under a leadership which can make the most of their combined efforts rather than dissipating resources in duplicated national organisations. There has however to be a new bargain. The old one is no longer on offer.

This is the end of another chapter in the long history of attempts to build an effective anti-Conservative coalition. There's no point in trying to rewrite the last chapter. We have to turn our attention to composing the next, carrying on the story from where we have got to so far.

Up to this point Labour Party members will be tempted to chuckle at the sorry tale: the betrayal of the hopes and efforts of so many in both parties by the manoeuvrings of professional politicians, their destructive skills acquired in the infighting of student politics and sharpened in the corridors of Westminster and the bars of London's political world. But Labour faces the same dilemmas, of strong leadership defined in terms of the resistance it offers to the wishes of its activists, of the smug superiorities of Westminster and the frustrated factionalism of those outside.

> ***"The relationship between a Liberal leader who was prepared to make compromises for the Alliance and an SDP leader who resisted compromise was transformed into the characterisations of "Spitting Image"***

Some way has to be found to harness the idealism of the hundreds of thousands of intelligent radicals who are scattered across the Labour, Liberal and Social Democratic parties, and well beyond them in single-issue groups and voluntary organisations. That cannot be done — as Peter Kellner argued in last week's *New Statesman* — without a democratic and open party organisation, persuasively and sympathetically led. Neil Kinnock is a less convincing man of destiny than David Owen. Whatever the plaudits of the parliamentary press, the footsoldiers whom we will need to build up an effective anti-Thatcher coalition will not blindly follow wherever they are led. The task for the Alliance, as for Labour, is to reach out from Westminster to pull them in and win them over, first to a coherent and credible alternative to the Thatcherite conventional wisdom, and then to a strategy for regaining power which rises above the sectarianism which disfigures British party politics. □

William Wallace has been vice-chairman of the Liberal Party Policy Committee throughout the six years of the Liberal-SDP Alliance.

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FRENCH OBSERVATION

Just like the Brits

Paris

THE FRENCH, on the whole, never doubted Mrs Thatcher's victory. The name of Neil Kinnock, or those of the Alliance leaders, hardly crossed the Channel. Setting aside the politicians and the academics, many French people envy the English a strong leader. They see Margaret Thatcher as a British version of Général de Gaulle, irritating for all her haughtiness, but wholly representative inside and outside the borders of her nation.

For many here, some of the features of Mrs Thatcher's personality which are often quoted in the press — being immodest, callous, or bullying — are in accordance with their view of the British nation itself. The string of wars between France and Britain throughout history, including the burning of Joan of Arc and the submission of the Burghers of Calais, have hardly been forgotten — and certainly not forgiven.

On a different level, the less vindicative and more psychologically-prone saluted Mrs Thatcher's recent victory with a malicious chuckle. They remember, from de Gaulle's days, that the 'love-hate' Freudian relationship between a leader and the nation is not an easy one to carry. Clinging for too long to the umbilical cord is not healthy for the nation and brings irrational, destructive bouts of rebellion.

As for the Labour Party, it was felt to be a loser: 'How can you defend the poor and the weak and be in the winning camp?' said one academic with sadness. He hoped that 'our' socialists were more aware of this election trap and would avoid it in time.

In the more naive feminist circles, Mrs Thatcher is often admired simply for being a woman in power, with no equivalent here; Simone Weill, for all her qualities, suffers from her sex in the race to the top.

Only the farmers have never forgotten Mrs Thatcher's stand for her country in the EEC, but they don't know who else could have been elected, not knowing any other prominent British figure (apart from the Queen).

Will this third term change anything in Britain? Opinions here vary, from those who see the British nation as forever stagnated around strong traditions, to others who envy Mrs Thatcher's determination, feeling certain that without her, Britain would crumble. In between, they don't care too much, anxiously watching our own election race which has already begun a year ahead of the starting pistol.

Yvette Marin

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The remarkably rapid death of hope, idealism & £6.5m.

SARAH BENTON *charts the rapid souring of a vision*

IT BEGAN as a dream, became real, developed into a nightmare and now, in the few weeks in which it has shed editors, columnists, a whole department, its board of directors and Founders' Trust, it appears to many of those left walking around in a daze wholly surreal. 'You know how everything seems larger than life in a Tom Sharpe novel?' says David Jones, the large, shambling man who has just become the latest of Britain's national newspaper editors. 'It's like that, only it's actually happening.'

Most improbable of all is the rescuer of this idealistic venture: a working-class multi-millionaire, who made his money in property; a home-grown, northern, would-be Citizen Kane who lives in a mediaeval castle which someone once shifted stone by gothic stone half a mile up the Lune valley so that its owners might have a better view.

News on Sunday began in the brain of Ben Lowe, a young researcher variously with the *Financial Times*, BBC and GLC. He imagined that there must be 300,000 people in Britain who would buy a radical, lively newspaper sympathetic to left-wing ideas and to working-class and feminist organisations.

At first, no one took him seriously. But Thatcher's triumphal victory of 1983 fed horror over the stance and standards of most of the press. A small group gathered, mainly friends in East London, people who came from the libertarian 'let's do it' left, urban idealists who had not given up on the working class. They included Chris Walsh, later head of the marketing department, who, through a letter from France and meal in a Tower Bridge restaurant, persuaded his friend Alan Hayling that their future lay in this newspaper.

The workers want it

By 1985, the group had attracted John Pilger, the famous *Mirror* journalist, who gave the paper editorial weight among what was a group of enthusiastic amateurs. Pilger did not want to be editor, but agreed that his name should be associated with the project. With the help of money from the Greater London Enterprise Board (GLEB) for a feasibility study, money-raising began in earnest, much of it by Alan Hayling. He attracted Nicholas Horsley, the chairman of Northern Foods; his family was known to be sympathetic to the left, though several did not realise that he had not built up the business himself, but inherited it.

They also had a solid body of market research, carried out in 1985 by Research Surveys Great Britain. Using the dummy the founding group had prepared, RSGB came up with evidence that their paper could be bought by between 800,000 and 1.5 million people, largely in the 'C1/C2/D' category: the working class.

NEWS ON SUNDAY
WORLD EXCLUSIVE
Britain's arms trail to Iran war
TO BE SOLD BY BALLOT, JUNE 11: 5 MILLION COUNCIL HOMES (TENANTS INCLUDED)
TORY SALE OF THE CENTURY
EVERYTHING MUST GO!
LOOK WHAT THEY'VE DONE TO OUR HOMES 10,11,12
NEWS ON SUNDAY
'PHONE TAP ON BISHOPS'
Healey will go in big Shadow shake-up
Martina loses winning touch
PRINCE

***News on Sunday* before and after the cataclysm. Left: the 24 May issue edited by Keith Sutton and (right) — the 21 June issue edited by David Jones**

The group was astonished. It had sent out a small ship to find the spice route and it came rollicking home with a cargo of new world gold and silver. Between that body of research, checked by bankers Guinness Mahon and the new board of directors, and the qualitative research carried out on dummies a few weeks before launch, no more extensive research was done to check the potential readership. Said Horsley last Wednesday: 'For 30 years I've been trying to get people to change their milkman and for 18 months I've been trying to get people to change their paper and it's bloody hard.'

The prospectus, promising investors a tempting mix of John Pilger, Nick Horsley and 1.1 million readers, went out last June. It estimated that it needed 800,000 readers to break even, and that it could buy equipment, launch the paper and cover expenses until the paper began to cover its costs for £6.5m.

They raised it, just. A third came from trade unions, 55 per cent from local authority pension funds, and the rest, hauled in in a desperate last-minute trawl, from individuals. Among them, the largest single investor was a little known northern businessman who put in £100,000. With this, Owen Oyston got himself a seat on the board.

The constitution of the new company included a Founders' Trust, a group of 10 people who were charged with the duty of staying true to the conception of the paper, as defined in the editorial charter, and to the paper's owners. They were allotted three seats on the board and a Golden Share. This gave them the right to block anyone buying up more than 15 per cent of the shares, the right to veto the hiring or firing of editors, and certain rights of veto over diversification and the disposal of assets.

The dummy war

By the autumn of last year, the paper had its £6.5m, an editorial charter, a Founders' Trust and a Board. It was wholly made up of non-executive directors — except for Alan Hayling, who was chief executive (Horsley did not become chief executive number 3 until the following February). From the money side they had Vella Pillay, a GLEB board member from the Bank of China, Anthony Everett from their bankers Guinness Mahon, and Owen Oyston. Ron Todd was on from the TGWU, the other large shareholder; Hilary Wainwright, then working for the GLC; Verity Lambert of Euston Films and the three Founders' Trust directors. Three worker directors joined the Board two months ago.

The next job was to appoint an editor. In

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Horsley's London flat, a group of five, including John Pilger, interviewed a small selection. Sylvia Collier, editorial director of the initial project, says one application was 'stunning': it came from Keith Sutton, who had been a Fleet Street sub and was then editor of the *Wapping Post*, a paper set up by those who were pushed or jumped from Murdoch's Fortress Wapping. Sutton, who appeared to impress Pilger, didn't interview well, but his written application was very good and the *Wapping Post* gave him points for principle. He was offered the job, though Pilger remained over him as editor-in-chief. By the time Pilger returned from an Australian trip in November, Sutton was ensconced in his editorial chair — and taking the paper in a direction which Pilger hated.

Shortly before Christmas last year, the row between Pilger and Sutton erupted. Both men produced dummies. Pilger's probably was truer to the original conception of the paper, Sutton's a more orthodox tabloid but oriented to the left, without the tits and bums. He described it as 'a left-wing *Sun*' and Pilger hit the roof. The Founders had to choose, and they chose Sutton. Hayling backed Pilger.

Several of them, like John Hoyland in last week's *New Statesman*, now say publicly they made the wrong decision. Others say they doubted if he was the right person, but crossed their fingers and hoped he would grow into the job. Sutton himself says his brief — an instant million working-class readers — was wrong, and that he had too many people breathing down his neck ready to pounce on his every hesitation. A few agree with him, and many of those who doubted that he was the right editor also agree he never had the right conditions to do the best job he could.

The elusive language

The phrase — 'a left-wing *Sun*' — is revealing. The *Sun* has shaped the tabloid world, has pioneered what is now understood by 'popular journalism', and stands for everything that people on the left most loathe about 'the media'. It's a world upside down, in which small items of gossip (Prince Charles pouts when his wife sits on his car bonnet) become the main story of the day, major abuses of power or sources of hardship are ignored, and anything associated with political or social dissent, from homosexuality to the Labour Party, is converted into evil forces of mythic proportion. Its success in selling this world, for which it has had to create a language of its own, ensures that it long ago passed the point when complaints about truth, fairness, accuracy had any effect on it at all. To criticisms like these, those who produce the *Sun* can point to the sales figures, the largest of any newspaper in Britain, and declare that the public has judged them, and found the paper to their taste.

Such self-assurance unnerves competitors. So dominant is the language that the *Sun* has created — and it is an artifice which new recruits have to learn — that rivals fear they have to talk in this language too or the public will not understand with all the proper nouns taken out. Polly Patullo, the person responsible for features with years of experience on the *Observer*, says: 'I was trying to find a new language, but I was having to work on the model of the *Mirror*.' Looking haggard and exhausted, she is in the mood to feel and admit to a loss of confidence; but the uncertainty over how a left-wing group, with strongly held principles of treating women, black people, working-class organisations with respect, which treats power and oppression seriously, can create a new popular language to convey this, while at the same time being witty, irreverent and entertaining, runs through the whole project.

By the end of January this year, with the launch date four months off, the nature of the *News on Sunday* had to be clearly defined so that the advertising agency could get to work on marketing the product. By then, Alan Hayling had lost the confidence of the various departmental heads and the Board had appointed Gerry Taylor as chief executive. A previous managing director of the *Guardian*, he had retired to run his own consultancy, Media Village, and since November had been working from London on *News on Sunday*'s advertising. He lasted 10 days.

Now he is only prepared to say in public that he left in frustration. He was frustrated by the inexperience which was coupled to an unshakeable commitment to democracy. Others say he was never in tune with the project, and particularly not in tune with the women who occupied an unusually high proportion of senior posts and were particularly keen not to replicate old-style newspaper autocracies. One male member of staff insists that 'there was no resistance to management by the staff. People were crying out for management.'

Taylor was succeeded by Horsley, who became chair and chief executive, with Hayling still in place as editorial director. From this point on, the beginning of February, the paper's conflicts were built in.

Nice and nasty

Why at this stage did no one step in to assert some strong direction over the company? Although Horsley was nominally chief executive, most people looking back say simply: 'There was no chief executive in situ.' The verdict on him is unanimous. 'He's a very very nice man, but he could not manage.'

It is clear that the relationship between Horsley and Hayling, the only two executive directors on the Board, with a company overview and on whom the Board depended for its information and assessment of the company, is crucial. It was one in which they both trusted and depended on each other, but too few people trusted them — Horsley because he was seen as a lovely man who was out of touch, Hayling because he had come to seem to many of the staff to be infinitely devious.

While everyone bears witness to Hayling's idealism and his vital energy in getting the project off the ground, everyone also agrees he was not the person to *run* the company. Sylvia Collier, a reporter in the London office, says he was good at working collectively, not at exercising authority.

Hayling says of this period that he was miserable and it showed that the staff had been against him ever since he had backed Pilger against Sutton. Why had he not resigned? Hayling first said he had wanted to, but that Horsley had threatened to resign when Sutton was backed over Pilger. Hayling had written him a long letter urging him to stay, saying that the project would face financial collapse without him: this moved Horsley into agreeing. Having done that, says Hayling, he could not then resign himself. 'I stayed out of loyalty to Nick,' says Hayling. After talking round his involvement for three hours with me one night last week, Hayling eventually said 'I should have resigned in January. There's no doubt about that.' At the end of March he *did* resign as editorial director. By April, he was still at work as 'the chairman's adviser'.

By March, ripples of anxiety were eddying around three points. The financial control of the company, the marketing and advertising for the launch, and the product itself. Hayling and Horsley are adamant that they knew where the money was and what it was being spent on: but heads of department are equally insistent that they did not know what their budgets were, or how much they were spending as financial controllers came and went rapidly. A natural puritanism kept a tight control over their day-to-day expenses, but over £200,000 was left unclaimed in VAT returns.

Sexist, but stunning

Of the £6.5m. raised £2m. had been earmarked for advertising the paper. It had not been costed for a small start with a slow build-up, but for a big bang launch which would bring in enough revenue and readers to keep it going over the inevitable subsequent fall in sales.

A few weeks before the 26 April launch, the agency, Bartle, Bogle, Hegarty — retained by Taylor to handle marketing — unveiled their proposals. They centred on what the agency thought was a brilliant slogan that said it all: 'No tits and a lot of balls'. Horsley says *he* thought it was a clever slogan and, though sexist, he would have accepted it. But he went to Manchester and found the staff locked in chapel meetings and ready to walk out. He was, he says, 'very very furious', but he bowed to their anger, the slogan was scrapped and BBH resigned.

The advertising they were left with was lacklustre and the company relied on the enthusiastic belief of marketing director Chris Walsh that 'below the line' advertising would do the trick. The conferences and meeting places of trade unions and the left would be saturated with leaflets, studded with display stalls, and the youth of tomorrow swept up and along in *News on Sunday* pop concerts.

Activists *did* know of the paper; but millions of promotional leaflets did *not* wing their way into the homes and hearts of ordinary people. The wave of concerts became two.

The one figure everyone at *News on Sunday* knows off by heart is *12 per cent*. Post-launch research showed '12 per cent awareness' of the paper — compared with the 60 per cent achieved by the *Independent*. Keith Sutton for one felt badly let down, and identifies this failure as one of the chief causes of the failure of the project.

It will remain a matter of controversy for a long time whether 'No tits but a lot of balls' is an irredeemably sexist slogan, as opposed to a sexually suggestive one, and whether the staff should have swallowed their principles and accepted the campaign going ahead, or whether, even if it had, the campaign would have put off the very people it was intended to attract. Such are the vagaries of feminist left-wing populism.

Moaning sickness

What was wrong with the product? David Jones says the early copies were 'full of whingeing and

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moaning. It's not enough to have stories of misery and horror. There have to be sharper, higher standards of journalism'. The paper did appear to most people to lack punch, a confident political edge, substance in its news stories, wit in its columns and thus, overall, a distinct and appealing character. The harsher critics among the staff, mainly the news journalists, were appalled by what they saw as the abandonment of news in favour of a wishy-washy 'comic'.

The handicaps Keith Sutton was working under were immense. Although they had appointed a young journalist as news editor — Kolton Lee, from the black weekly, *Voice* — it had been expected he would work under an assistant editor responsible for news. No such news supremo was appointed because, claims Keith Sutton, they couldn't find anyone of the right calibre willing to move to Manchester. Lee was thus left on his own. Polly Patullo is one of several who say the appointment was 'cruel', fearing that in an impossible job his blackness would be held in judgment.

In March, worried at the dummies they were seeing, the Board appointed a Product Development Committee, which became the Product Review Committee. It met weekly. 'They were the commissars,' says Polly Patullo. 'That was their role, they held the chalice of the dream in their hands.' The committee is widely credited with goodwill, the tactful chairing of the endlessly energetic Hilary Wainwright respected by those around. Why, given the widespread disquiet about the paper, more was not done to get it right before launch is a matter of dispute, as is the nature of Keith Sutton himself.

Many found him friendly and likeable, doing the best he could with too few staff, too little money and an implacably hostile editorial director. But even these sympathisers think he had to go. At best, he was not able to stamp any clear direction on the paper. His insistence that it was a 'subs' paper', as the tabloids are, had few sympathisers. He rejected the view that the paper should be professionally designed, and that there should be specialist reporters. A London design team brought in by Hayling resigned, saying their advice was ignored.

There is another view, that the approachable friendliness was a con; he was fantastically stubborn, offensive to his critics, and took a pride in being 'an ignoramus' who didn't read books. The gulf between what he produced and his submission to be editor was so enormous that several found it hard to believe they stemmed from the same man. Whatever view people had of him as a man, most shared the disbelief in what he had produced. The dummies and first issue produced 'panic' in the London office. Many, from Board to staff, were torn between wanting him to leave at once and fearing that his sacking would put the whole paper in jeopardy.

The dream fails

Just over half a million people bought the launch issue on 26 April. Within two issues that number had halved. It was quickly found it was in the wrong newsagents: unsold stacks in the working-class housing estates, brisk sales where a more active political culture thrived; no copies available in some shops. 80,000 of the launch issue in London were lost when the *Telegraph* printers failed to deliver.

As the disappointing sales figures rolled in, it was clear that the paper would run out of money in a few weeks. Circulation was too low to trigger the overdraft facility with the Midland Bank, which depended on a circulation of 600,000.

Here, Owen Oyston begins to move into the limelight. He had just sold his estate agency and had no shortage of liquid cash. He was also, with his theatrical manner, gothic castle and undoubted hostility to Thatcherism, well placed to assume the voice of the industrial, anti-Thatcher north; and ready to make the move from business to public life. David Jones, who has known Oyston for some time, says he doesn't want the paper as 'a vehicle for his ego'. Others are sceptical. 'He's unbelievably vain and egotistic,' said one.

Oyston began funding the paper's losses, running at over £150,000 a week, by week three. The TGWU put in another £350,000. Negotiations began between Oyston and the Founders' Trust for a new shareholding and board structure. At first, after a long session at the Excelsior hotel in London, an arrangement seemed possible. The Founders would hand over their Golden Share in exchange for a business plan, evidence of money raised and written guarantee that Oysten would negotiate over a role for the Founders' Trust. Oyston promised the editorial charter could be written into the paper's Articles of Association. He asked them to hand over the Golden Share by midnight, Friday 12 June. The Founders' responded with a written list of their conditions: they did not believe his deadline was serious, though Horsley had assured them it was. Over that weekend, Oyston seems to have decided it would be better for the company to go into receivership; there would then be no Board or Founders' Trust to negotiate with; only the receiver. On Tuesday 16 June the Board formally agreed to call in the receiver.

In eight issues, the shareholders saw £6.5m. disappear —including some £3.6m. from council pension funds, for which the leaders of Southwark (£300,000), Wolverhampton (£300,000), Derbyshire (£260,000), Lambeth (£250,000), Brent (£250,000), Cleveland (£250,000), Haringey (£250,000) and Lothian (£200,000) will have to account to their oppositions and their voters. They may not lose everything. Oyston has proposed a new shareholding structure, with 37.5 pe cent each for him and the TGWU, and 25 per cent for the existing shareholders.

What else could the Founders' Trust have done? It felt the responsibility for the local authorities' and the unions' money, the dream which they had supported and sold to their backers, and which had been entrusted to their care. They could not just hand it over without a murmur when a rich property owner, however sympathetic, arrived to rescue them.

Despite this harrowing start, the grey and exhausted faces of many of those involved, the bitternesses that were generated and profound hurts sustained, there is still a belief in the paper. David Jones has got off to a good start. Most of those who have met him for the first time like him and respect his view of the paper. They feel they know where they are and where the paper is with him. To some, that means they are excluded. Anna Coote, the paper's main columnist and best-known writer, feels very doubtful if there is a future for her there, and several of the women fear that he has little time for a journalism that explores and reports on issues that shape women's lives — which are not usually wicked policemen or MI5 agents, the 'boys' stuff', as feminists on the paper dubbed it. *Mail* newspapers built up their circulation between the tabloids and qualities precisely through developing a journalism that appealed to women. As a spread from the *Tatler* pinned up outside personnel manager Christine Jackson's office says, women are in vogue in the '80s.

The dream of a 'different' paper, with different news values and different politics seems likely to continue under the joint aegis of Oyston and Jones. But there can be no doubt, says Hilary Wainwright, that they failed to carry out the initial dream. For that to have survived, the ownership and democratic control of the company were as integral to the project as the paper itself. □

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NOT SURPRISING. THERE AREN'T ANY IN THE VATICAN HIERARCHY
NOT BECAUSE OF ANY CHAUVINISM OFCOURSE! IT'S JUST WE FEEL MEN DO A BETTER JOB IN COMMANDING THE FLOCK, DOING PAPERWORK, WORKING UNDER PRESSURE AND THE LIKE.
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The life in death of the corporate state

KEITH MIDDLEMAS, ***the country's foremost industrial historian, argues, in the first of a two-part series, that corporatism has been preserved and may be set for a modest renaissance***

CORPORATISM has had a bad name, at least at the extremes of British politics, for more than ten years. Yet discussion about its future is more than an academic exercise because the institutions on which state tripartism was based in the post-war years still exist, and still derive, from their members' concerns, the focus in which they understand and address government.

The mid-1970s reaction, whether from the right or left, either denied the propriety of tripartism, or claimed that the limited number of topics on which industry, organised labour and the financial institutions were prepared to co-operate was hopelessly inadequate to Britain's needs. *The first, constitutional, objection was always unsound; the second may no longer be true.*

Resumption of some form of co-operative planning under even this Conservative government is probable. A sense of interdependence is increasingly to be found among larger firms, banks, financial institutions and many trade union headquarters, even if not precisely in the old bargaining language of wages, profits and a higher sustained level of employment. It is much less vulnerable to depreciation by Tory ministers (even if they wanted it) than it was in 1983.

A tendency toward corporate behaviour ('corporate bias') has been evident in these sectors since the early part of the century, sharply increasing during the two world wars, dilating in peacetime, but sustained particularly from 1961 to the late '70s. It characterises a system which works generally to achieve aims regarded as in the national interest — although agreement about what that is has always been a matter for continuing competition. Consensus comes *after* the fight, but can never eliminate it: it needs constantly to be updated. Failure to update it produced the various post-war breakdowns, in the late '50s, the late '60s and the mid-'70s.

A network still valued

The general crisis of the mid-'70s and the consequent revaluation of 35 years' experience profoundly disturbed the mechanisms and the cast of mind of governments and the civil service, giving rise to a loss of faith in post-war governing practice which, more than anything else, facilitated the emergence of genuinely alternative strategies. It also killed off the already weakened commitment to full employment. Other means were found to legitimate the new balance of power in industry and to determine who set what

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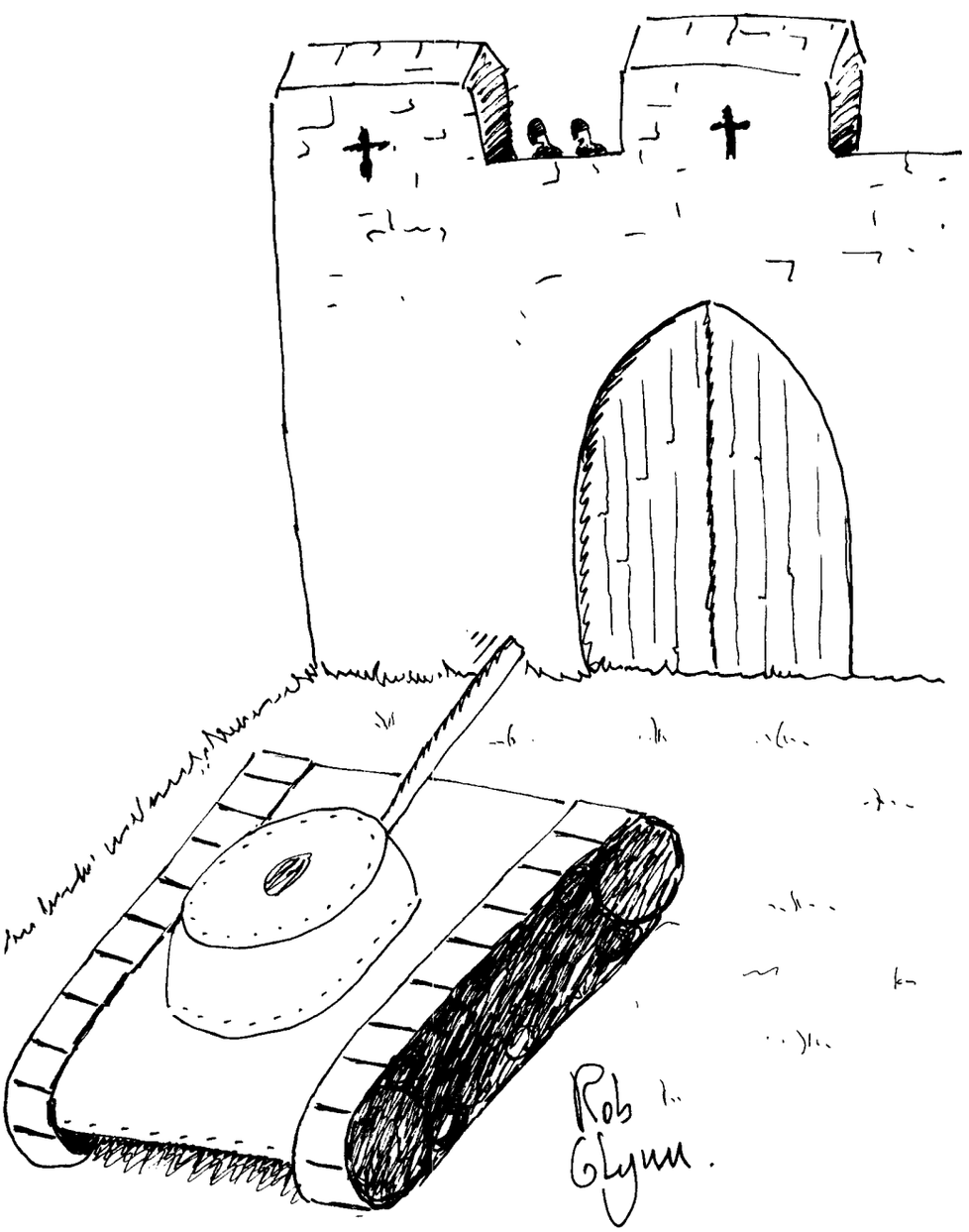

'They don't expect us to fall for that old Trojan horse trick, do they?'

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obligations as well as rewards. Yet, however radically new this seemed, and despite the Labour government's industrial strategy (which was in any case always in dispute), much of what is called Thatcherite economics was already in place by 1977.

Deliberate downgrading of the CBI's as well as the TUC's access to and influence in government after 1979 by ministers at the Treasury, Trade and Industry (and to a much lesser extent at the less powerful Employment) made it seem that corporatism was at best irrelevant, at worst the core of what had been wrong. Yet any study of the assistance dispensed by departments, especially by the vastly funded Manpower Services Commission (MSC) since then, shows that the picture is very much more complicated.

Over the past eight years, labour has been 'rewarded' by huge sums spent on employment and training as well as 'punished' by political and legal constraints on unions; and industry has exercised long-term leverage over government in such areas as merger policy.

In 1970, the Heath government swept away most of Labour's interventionist institutions, and sharply pruned the National Economic Development Council (NEDC) committee structure. The survival not only of Neddy but of the Conciliation Service (ACAS) and even the MSC has at various times provided test cases for the present administration; but they all stand, and all seem increasingly valued. Geoffrey Howe, when Chancellor, always wanted to retain NEDC and its network of sector working parties, even if only as a sort of transmission belt for the new orthodoxy: Nigel Lawson has recently confirmed a useful future 'years ahead'; and Lord Young sees it as a necessary forum for discussion about where the new jobs are to come from. Its network is valued, even in the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and it remains the best forum for the four potential partners to meet, understand each other better, and listen, as well as talk.

The TUC: still hanging in

Among the partners, the disarray of six or seven years ago has begun to wear off. It is a truism that the trade union movement has suffered a heavy loss of political influence, though how much that was the result of a deliberate policy of hanging up the telephone, how much due to changes in the law, how much to the great set-piece battles with steel unions and the NUM, and in the newspaper industry, how much to mass unemployment and a European-wide revanche by employers, is much harder to decide.

It could equally well be argued that long changes inside unions, and an adaptation to members' changing needs (shown in the TUC's own large-scale inquiries in 1981) and the isolation on the General Council of general secretaries who stood out against such reforms actually would, in the long run, have made much recent legislation unnecessary.

The fact the government has claimed it does not need the TUC does not preclude such a need in the future; and on that premise, Norman Willis has steered it rather cleverly in the last two years, raising a comparison with Walter Citrine in the period 1931-35 — when the TUC also remoulded the Labour Party. Re-establishing influence requires an incremental strategy, with much effort directed to apparently small questions such as picking away at the statistical basis for the government's unemployment figures, or easing the TUC back into NEDC after its walkout over the GCHQ affair.

It would require a far greater, indeed impossible, effort to re-establish the 1979 balance with employers' organisations, not only because 1978-79 was a partly self-inflicted wound, but because the restoration of an earlier balance still counts almost universally among employers as the single great victory of the last eight years — even if they (and perhaps a government which, on the available evidence, had no conception of the scale of unemployment they were helping to unleash) regret the price.

The way to a common agenda must therefore be slow and devious. It suits the CBI to listen to the TUC now, in NEDC for example. They too want more corporate influence in government, and Sir Terence Beckett, the former CBI Director General, argued forcefully for keeping NEDC in being in the ten months after the TUC's 1984 walkout. Lower down, at sector level, the TUC retains influence, but only really insofar as it has expertise and is prepared to co-operate. Unions have little influence over the larger firms with their own relationships with government, and have lost considerable ground in state industries now privatised — having once held something akin to joint management in what is now British Telecom.

The TUC's public line has to remain that the coming economic crisis will require the state to ask it to come home. But there is some mileage, at the level of the firm, in single union agreements (however suspect politically): they could foster not only wider forms of collective bargaining, but also greater involvement in business strategy, investment policy, trading performances, manpower planning and operating efficiency. A similar agenda could be opened up if the TUC can permanently establish what is already informal practice on NEDC: that it will discuss wages, manning or productivity so long as these are taken together with industrial investment, financial regulation, or the revitalising of management. ▷

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Companies: a different culture

It is many years since the largest UK firms or their joint bodies, such as the Engineering Employers Federation, with their own staff for dealing with government departments, relied on the CBI to put their case. At most they use it to reinforce it by other channels. But small firms and many medium-sized ones, lacking the resources, do, whether or not the CBI has real influence. The CBI's position was therefore vulnerable to a 'lockout' by government after 1979, which put at risk its value to the numerical majority of its members. The shock was worse because until then it had been notably united in defence against the Bullock Report on Industrial Democracy, and in support of the Conservative opposition.

Relationship with government in the last five years has settled into an uneasy equilibrium in which neither side expects very much of the other and both carp about lack of compliance and understanding: over industry's responsibility for training, over the failure to restructure moribund trade associations, or inculcate 'best-practice' management. At headquarters level, the CBI has access to a vast fund of information about industry on which the DTI evidently relies, and its working parties and research resources are the envy of the under-funded TUC. Yet it often fails to make an impression on departments, and tends to complain (as in 'Working With Whitehall', 1987) of a 'different culture', as if that discovery were novel.

Its Council, President and Director General have to carry with them a far more diffuse membership than any TUC general secretary, and this may explain the CBI's relative failure (and the DTI's prolonged irritation) to disseminate ideas about change down to the level of the individual firm; as well as its generalised preoccupation with the power of the financial sector — as the surprisingly bitter remarks about 'short termism' and takeovers showed at its 1986 conference. Nevertheless the CBI's continuing interest in questions of employee involvement, such as better communications and 'quality circles', does amount to concern with participation, beyond the obvious higher productivity implications, which trade unions can latch on to, either centrally or in the individual firm.

The Bank: recovering power

In talking of collective institutions it is easier to discuss the Bank of England, whose Governor now sits on NEDC, than the various City markets or institutions which rarely seek to be participants in such discussion. Damaged for a time, in Treasury and ministerial eyes, by the Johnson Matthey affair in October 1984 with its echoes of the 1973-4 'lifeboat', to say nothing of being discredited (probably quite wrongly) by the failure to control money supply before £M3 was abandoned, the Bank has re-established a large part of its authority over what might be called 'the new agenda' by a series of cautious but massively researched statements, in the *Quarterly Bulletin* and the Governor's recent lectures, which show a keen sense of a national interest in re-organising and modernising industry, the labour market, and financial services, not as a series of disparate activities but as a set of interdependent problems.

This is not of course a statist view; and it seeks, by emphasising an efficiency-oriented national interest, to pre-empt the views of other competitors. But its expertise, experience, and the weight given to management of the exchange rate make it a powerful voice, especially since the government's own voice is surprisingly uncertain, and departmental views suffered the blanketing effect of prime ministerial management during the long election run-up.

Government and its agencies

The DTI's voice is the most confused and ill co-ordinated. Its ancient dilemma — the Board of Trade antiphony between free trade and protection — has been compounded by a new one ever since 1979: the subterranean disagreement between officials who had established an industrial strategy in 1974-75 and a succession of ministers (with Patrick Jenkin as an exception) schooled in the dogmas of *The Right Approach*. The coherence of competition and merger policy has suffered as well as actual support for industrial development.

In contrast, the Treasury seems to have built on a once subsidiary tradition of interest in industry dating from the late 1960s. Its contribution to tripartite discussion has edged away from 'unit costs' — i.e. wages — towards a broader concern with efficiency, competitiveness and the practical advantages and limits of government stimuli or regulation. At official level, this may reflect Treasury experience in similar dilemmas since the introduction of competition and credit control in 1971, and also the current issue of investor protection in retail financial markets compared with competition in wholesale ones.

The wild card on the government side of this structural array remains the Manpower Services Commission whose broad-side interventionism has filled the gap between DTI, Employment and Education on training, manpower and information technology, like mercury oozing steadily outwards. Its views were an irritant to government, under Sir Richard O'Brien, but his successor Lord Young developed and extended his insights to the point at which it is hard to see how the MSC could now be deprived of its vast cash resources and political clout. It has successfully challenged the DTI and the Department of Education and Science.

MSC has attracted as well as repelled trade unionists. The CBI has welcomed its work almost uncritically, giving it advice and information, and trying to be associated with its initiatives. Few probably in the CBI worry about its wider political implications as an instrument of government: most see it as neutral, a non-political part of the machinery, essential to an advanced industrial society.

If one assumes that only the Cabinet counts, these forces could be disparaged as peripheral; but the agenda which exists for them all is very much part of the political core and remains after 12 June. □

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ECONOMICS

The City: Duke of York stuff

Patrick Forbes

IT SHOULD really be Duchess of York, Fergie notwithstanding. For Mrs Thatcher has led share prices up — 'The FT Ordinary Index passed 1,800 for the first time' (*FT* Thursday 18 June) — and then she led them down again — 'British financial markets ended a volatile week pushed sharply lower' (*FT* Saturday 20 June).

Mrs Thatcher had nothing directly to do with this remarkable reversal. It is, rather, testament to the City's boundless capacity for self-delusion.

Before the election London brokers had talked up share prices on the assumption that Thatcher was set fair for a third term. Mrs Thatcher duly secured her third term. And last Thursday her government released a string of favourable economic statistics, among them the lowest unemployment figures for three years. So what happened?

Share prices fell, the gilts market took a caning, and on Monday Sterling went into reverse. Indeed the brokers have managed to create the possibility of a vicious circle in which share prices free-fall and interest rates rise.

The vicious circle works like this. The lower Sterling goes, the less likely becomes an interest rate cut, the more likely an increase (reversing the recent dip in the mortgage rate). Should UK interest rates rise, then UK equities and gilts will become relatively expensive to hold, and investors will start to reduce their holdings; particularly foreign investors, who find their profits squeezed as the pound goes lower.

> ***'The City's latest craze is the rumour. The rumour has many attractions. You can't be prosecuted for trading on inside information, because you make the information up. And it can be very profitable. If you'd sold 20,000 shares in ad. agency Lowe Howard on Thursday morning, on the basis of malicious (and untrue) gossip, you'd have been £12,000 better off by mid-afternoon'***

As investors bail out, so share prices become depressed, and the voices of those analysts of a gloomy disposition louder — drawing attention to Britain's increasingly vulnerable balance of payments, and the rapid growth in money supply. As the Cassandras multiply, UK broking houses start to follow their clients, switching out of the domestic market. And so the slither in share prices becomes a slide, the pound falls as money leaves the country, and interest rates are pushed up further in support of the currency.

APOCALYPSE *1987* is some way off. Markets may continue their slide for a while, and that mortgage rate cut may be short-lived. But most British analysts still *perceive* the UK stock exchange as cheap relative to other markets, growth to be assured and Mrs Thatcher as ensuring that 'political risk' is at a minimum.

But the events of last week demonstrate how fragile and loosely formed brokers' perceptions are. As Tim O'Dell of Phillips and Drew wryly commented: 'It was Duke of York stuff.'

Before the election, UK houses had talked up share prices on the basis of a peculiar fiction: 'The Japanese are coming.' Once Mrs Thatcher was safely back in No 10, relieved foreigners (particularly the Japanese) would pour money into London markets. Typical was a broker's circular from Barclays de Zoete Wedd:

> Our investment recommendations have so far been based on the assumption that there will be a Conservative government with an absolute majority into the 1990s. If these assumptions are borne out on June 11th UK investors will be waiting a flow of money which might become a flood.

Foolishly, the London houses believed analyses like that, and went 'long'. They bought in shares, so they could sell them at the higher prices prevailing once the new money had 'flooded' into the new market. Others talked of a 'wall of money', but the reaction was universal: 'Buy.'

Indeed brokers were so heavily commmitted, that they couldn't buy any more shares themselves. So, if prices were going to keep going up after the election, foreign money *had* to come into the UK market.

In the event share prices dropped like a stone. And many London banks, brokers, and pension funds got their fingers burnt. How could this be? The Japanese had, and have, no intentions of moving into the London market, just yet. And why didn't UK institutions know? Because they didn't ask them, or if they did, they weren't listening to the answer.

'We have said consistently that we're not going in wholesale, indeed we said it right throughout the election,' said Nomura, the big Japanese bank, last Friday. Indeed if the UK institutions had been listening a little harder, they would have found that though banks such as Nomura may have optimistic targets of around 2,500 for the Index at the year-end, in the short term they are looking for a 5 per cent correction *downwards*. Roger Bootle, gilts commentator at Lloyds bank: 'The Japanese are not fools, they're not going into a market that's moving against them.'

Had UK institutions looked, as well as listened, they would have seen that the gilts market was moving down, poised to drag shares with it. And any surplus cash not already invested in the hope of 'floods' tomorrow was about to be soaked up by funding requests from Robert Maxwell's British Printing and Communications Corporation, and Sainsbury's.

But they followed neither course of action, and prices collapsed on Thursday last. Such was the febrile atmosphere that prices fell further as the government released a set of economic statistics that showed Britain had the fastest growth rate in Europe, and unemployment below three million for the first time since June 1983.

In the bizarre way that the Stock Exchange works, it was the price fall that gave credence to gloomy predictions emanating from such as Phillips and Drew and Messel — not the other way round. They argued that these statistics, allied with higher-than-expected money supply figures and wage increases were proof positive that the economy was about to 'overheat' and inflation to explode.

'Normally nobody would listen to them. Everyone's given up on money supply figures, and productivity increases should knock out the effects of the wage increases. But everybody was going mad,' one economist moaned. More temperate was John Shepherd of Warburg in the *FT*: 'This is one of the fastest swings of sentiment I have ever seen. From boundless optmism before the election to quite dire pessimism.' On Monday pessimism took the pound below $1.60, creating the possibility, though not the likelihood, of the vicious circle mapped out above.

Shepherd's 'swing of sentiment' illustrates the debilitating effects of the City's latest craze, *the rumour*. The rumour has many attractions. You can't be prosecuted for trading on inside information, because you make the information up. And it can be very profitable. If you'd sold 20,000 shares in ad. agency Lowe Howard on Thursday morning, on the basis of malicious (and untrue) gossip, you'd have been £12,000 better off by mid-afternoon.

But as the Japanese sting demonstrates, the game has some unfortunate side-effects. If brokers start to believe their own inventions, they can lose large sums of money, and create the sort of environment (falling prices) where it is difficult to win that money back. When that happens, disgruntled clients start to place their business elsewhere. And British companies start to lose patience with a system that adds millions to their value one day, and then capriciously takes it away the next.

> ***'John Shepherd of Warburg: "This is one of the fastest swings of sentiment I have ever seen. From boundless optimism before the election to quite dire pessimism"'***

To those of us who are neither client nor broker, but who face higher interest rates as a result of their dealings, the whole episode would seem to confirm the wisdom of Roosevelt's message to Congress in 1908:

> There is no moral difference between gambling at cards or in lotteries, or on the race track and gambling in the stock market. One method is just as pernicious to the body politic as the other, and in degree the evil worked is far greater. □

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MEDIA

Mrs Thatcher under European eyes

Steven Erlanger

Mrs Thatcher's claim just before the election that her fellow West European leaders had adopted 'our policies' was both true and false, argues the European Correspondent of the Boston Globe, *in our last media column on the election by a foreign correspondent.*

THE FRENCH, in naughty moods, consider Mrs Thatcher 'mal baisée'; but from M. Chirac through to the Socialists, they respect her, and not only because she is considered less stupid and more successful than Ronald Reagan. Unemployment in France is now at 11 per cent, the official British figure, but inexorably rising; there are terrible problems over increasing deficits in the social security system; and the French have discovered their own embodiment of social malaise and division in the very un-British figure of Jean-Marie Le Pen.

Ebullient Italian talk of 'il sorpasso', founded on a statistical jiggling of the size of the black economy (as if Britain hardly had one), has been replaced by gloom about slower growth, declining exports and a worsening budget deficit that already represents 13 per cent of gross national product. As the Italians were confronted with their own bad-tempered election campaign, there was increasing talk of electoral reform to limit the influence of minority parties and allow 'strong government'.

Even the West Germans have made few inroads in world-standard new technologies or had much success in joining the international financial services boom. Despite Herr Kohl's success in retaining office against a riven and demoralised Social Democratic Party, there is a deeper crisis of confidence as his putative allies, the Free Democrats, are reviving as the party of the centre and the country agonises about its own North-South divide. In the European Community, too, it is now West Germany which is the odd-country-out — stubborn on agriculture and the EC budget, humiliatingly torn over a coherent response to Mr Gorbachev's 'double-zero' offer.

In West Germany, too, Mrs Thatcher is a figure of admiration and even intermittent envy — her political antennae on 'double zero' are an object lesson and rebuke to Herr Kohl, whose Christian Democrats suffered stinging losses in state elections in Hamburg and Rhineland Palatinate; her ability to get her policies through without ambitious coalition partners is a version of paradise for a lazy man happiest with a quiet life.

In Western Europe generally, of course, there is no particular hankering for everyday British existence or any real sense that Britain's relative economic decline, though a truism and at least temporarily halted, will transform itself into an economic boom that will leave the rest of the European Community floundering in its wake.

Even across the Channel, there is some understanding that Mrs Thatcher's blithe, messianic self-confidence and creeping authoritarianism ('not one of us', 'go on and on') is fundamentally unattractive, and that her fond self-image as a 'radical conviction politician' is scarcely supported by her impact on the day-to-day lives of most Britons.

But among the political classes, certainly, and among a growing proportion of Western Europe's spreading bourgeoisie, there is an undeniable consensus that Mrs Thatcher has grown into her job and become a leader of the kind that transforms debate, and that has been missing from the continent for too many years now.

Mrs Thatcher is also seen as having played an important role (if not the vital one Tory bumpf portrays) in the development of East-West relations generally, and certainly in US-European ones. Her good start with Mr Gorbachev, four months before he became general secretary, is widely envied, as is his complicity in her shrewdly scripted pre-election campaign. It is also true that Mr Gorbachev used her to his own ends, selling one of the world's most prominent conservatives on his 'sincerity', both in domestic liberalisation and international amity; and that he has neatly double-crossed her on shorter-range missiles.

But Mrs Thatcher has achieved a prominence in superpower affairs unmatched by any third party. While at home, and with justification, she is attacked for too much domesticity in her relationship with President Reagan, in Western Europe she is regarded as having more cynically manipulated that relationship — first, to her own benefit with Gorbachev, and second, to Europe's benefit, by talking sense to Mr Reagan on arms control and keeping him closer to earth on Star Wars and the ABM treaty.

In West European eyes, at any rate, she is less of a pet poodle to an increasingly declining and disconcerting Mr Reagan than Mr Denis Healey charges. If she is not a 'European' in their own fashion, she has become a useful European representative nonetheless to an American government that remains vital to European security.

IN ECONOMIC terms, her record is more mixed, of course, but there seems a broader understanding in Western Europe than in Britain of how much her economic ideology, such as it is, has been subordinate to the supreme good of winning an election, as the November expenditure statement proved.

With the dumping of monetarism and so much else, that 'ideology' has been pared down to low inflation, fiscal rectitude, privatisation (entirely self-serving from any Treasury point of view), an attempt to reduce structural rigidities through modest deregulation and the war against union power. Though the last is sometimes considered a particularly British problem, it is not (as French and Spanish unions will testify). Her policies for a long time now have not been very different from the growing West European and even worldwide consensus about how to secure non-inflationary economic growth.

Mrs Thatcher's other main point of pride, the cutting of income taxes, is regarded in Western Europe as only partially successful, given that real tax burdens for most people have gone up since 1978-79, as has the percentage of GDP taken in taxes. In political terms, the image of 'tax cutter' is respected, though Mrs Thatcher's accomplishment here pales besides Mr Reagan's. And Westerners with more money seem disappointingly eager to spend it on expensive imports and their own enjoyment rather than follow the Japanese model (itself changing) and put it all in the bank.

Though her policies now generally fit the Western consensus, it would be wrong to say that Mrs Thatcher set the mode for Western Europe — Mr Reagan should get some credit for that, if anyone does. But given her starting point in 1979, and her decision to deal a shuddering and brutal shock to the British economy on the back of the worldwide recession of 1980-81, there is a sense among the OECD countries that she since has managed her brief pretty well, particularly in her second term.

Though she ensured that recession hit Britain harder than other OECD countries, there is no question that the UK GDP growth line has since moved strongly ahead of the rest of Western Europe and continues to do so. British inflation, while increasing again as spending does and always higher than West Germany's, is more than respectable compared to the rest of Western Europe.

Unemployment in Britain is an indisputable black spot, accelerated by Thatcher's tight budgets early in her first term, to a total which few in the government seemed to imagine, if they thought about it at all. In hindsight the Tories defend it as a 'necessary shakeout'; for Labour and the Alliance, more justifiably, it was random slaughter.

From that lower base, manufacturing investment and output have been heading upwards since 1983, though they are still below 1979 peaks. But that is also true of France and Italy. And all of Western Europe and America has been hurt by new competition from low-wage, weak-union centres in the Third World and Pacific Rim, particularly in areas of heavy manufacturing, like steel and ship production, where there are few secrets left any more. The West Germans, of course, have done better here than other West European countries, but they have also been shrewder about their markets, and the devastation in the Ruhr is not incomparable with that in Sheffield or Birmingham.

The Tories make much of productivity increases, and certainly, starting in 1983, UK figures have been higher than the average of the big seven industrialised countries. But they are essentially in line with the rest of the European Community. That's not altogether a bad outcome, OECD officials believe, given the general EC problem for at least 15 years that productivity increases have come at the expense of job creation.

In terms of capital investment, Britain has done slightly less well than the EC average from 1981-85, but again OECD officials believe that is not necessarily bad. By easing some capital incentives, the Tories have made it somewhat less attractive than in their first parliament for businessmen to offset labour costs by buying machinery. That has kept productivity down a bit, but softened the trend toward unemployment.

In West European terms, then, the verdict on Thatcher's economy is not surprising: not as good as the Tories claimed and not as bad as Labour charged. □

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Times of work & sacrifice

MERVYN JONES *on socialism, machismo, sweat and indolence*

REVISITING Cuba for the first time sine 1968, I look around for the changes. It's obvious at once that people are healthier, better nourished and better clothed. Casting my mind back, I remember walking down Calle Neptuno, a long street in central Havana, and seeing nothing but a pathetic ration-shop with a queue waiting for supplies to arrive. Now, I repeat the walk and find a supermarket stocked with a reasonable quantity of tinned or frozen food, several good shoe shops, and a newly built department store offering an excellent range of household equipment.

Practically everything is rationed, which sounds bad. Yet there are few actual shortages; the worst is milk, of which an adult can get only one litre a fortnight (there's free daily milk for young children). Generally, the rationing is an aspect of the two-tier price system. On the ration, you are entitled to strictly limited quantities — enough meat for one meal a week, four packets of cigarettes a month, one pair of shoes a year — at a low, heavily subsidised price. On the free market, you can buy whatever you can afford, but at a much higher price. For example, cigarettes are 25 centavos rationed or 1 peso 65 centavos unrationed. (The peso is valued nominally at US $1.22, the black-market rate being 5 pesos to the dollar.)

The aim of the system is to ensure that even the lowest-paid worker is never in real need. It depends, of course, on what you call need. The people who fill the shops are probably skilled workers with a fair productivity record, taking home 250 pesos a month or more. A man who made only the minimum wage, 100 pesos a month would virtually have to live on his rations, and would have problems if he had a family to support. Thanks to machismo, which is alive and well, Cuban men tend to disapprove of their wives working. I could get no reliable figures, but it seems that only about half the women are in employment.

Ah yes, machismo. As we drive around, my guide and driver chat incessantly about women, the big joke being that the driver has an 'extra wife' in each town we approach. If we overtake an attractive girl on foot or cycle, he slows to throw her a salty remark. 'In England,' I say, 'the women protest against that.' Bewilderment. I continue relentlessly: 'The socialist and communist women protest most' (the word 'feminist' would mean nothing). Bewilderment deepens, until the driver says: 'Reckon I'll stay in Cuba.' Let me add, though, that women hitch-hike alone, and Cubans are surprised to hear that this would be considered dangerous in Europe.

Next day, the guide points to the site where Cuba's first nuclear power station is being built, to a Soviet design. 'In England,' I say, 'Mrs Thatcher wants more of those things, but the socialists and communists oppose them.' I must have left Amado and Alejo with the impression that England is a very peculiar country.

The people's health

The most remarkable progress has been in the sphere of health. The 1959 revolution found Cuba with 6,000 doctors (all in private practice and mostly in the large towns) of whom 3,000 promptly departed for the US. Cuba today has 25,000 doctors, two-thirds of them women, and 24,000 students in training at 18 medical schools (there was one in 1959). The vast majority of these doctors work in the free health service, but private medicine has never been outlawed and a few private doctors are still in business.

I was given a tour of an enormous hospital in the centre of Havana, converted from the former Stock Exchange. So far as I could tell, it's a superbly equipped modern hospital, and I thought the rooms preferable to those in a leading hotel. Here, Cuban surgeons have performed 23 heart transplants, with 16 survivors, and their first heart-and-lung transplant (the patient is alive after five months). I asked Dr Ramón Prado, who briefed me at the Ministry of Health, how long you'd have to wait in Cuba for a non-urgent operation. He completely failed to understand the question, but eventually said that if there were some exceptional problem, like building work at your nearest hospital, the wait could be a month. By the way, abortion is free on demand, but the demand is moderate because of the contraceptive advice offered at all polyclinics.

> ***'Cubans know that their revolution has banished the elemental poverty, the gross injustices and corruption of the past. Now they would like more money to spend in the shops'***

The pattern of health and illness in Cuba is now that of a developed country, the main causes of death being listed as cancer, heart or cardiovascular conditions, and accidents (road deaths are at a high level considering the sparseness of the traffic). Diphtheria, TB, tetanus and gastro-enteritis no longer figure in the mortality statistics. The expectation of life is 75, about as good as anywhere in the world. Infantile mortality is a few points higher than in Britain; before the revolution, it was five times as high.

The vulnerable point in the Cuban record is undoubtedly the state of housing. I asked Dr Prado whether he didn't think there was a link between bad housing and ill-health, and he agreed that there was, but the thought didn't seem to be in the forefront of his mind. In the old part of Havana, with narrow streets and a desperate lack of fresh air, the congestion is frankly terrible. The average standard is a family to each room, with one shower and toilet in the building. I saw water-trucks going round and learned that these homes have no drinking water laid on. The policy is to empty these shabby, dilapidated old buildings and rehouse the people in outlying new communities, but it's not being pursued with urgency.

In rural areas, people live in the traditional square wooden houses, generally with a single room for all purposes, and normally with unpainted walls, untiled floors, and no glass in the windows (Cuba has mosquitoes). If you want a new house you build it yourself, acquiring the materials from the State and repaying the cost over a period of years. With rare exceptions, the new houses are just like the old ones.

Even the housing in 'new communities' isn't very impressive, consisting of two-room flats (occasionally three rooms for a large family) in six-storey blocks without lifts. These are rented at 10 per cent of wages, a formula interpreted to mean the wages of each working occupant. If you're very lucky, you could move into a flat after waiting five years. The priority doesn't depend on need, but on the applicant's work record.

The blackbeard cult

I noted one change that I found disturbing, though I doubt if it worries many Cubans. Back in 1968, with memories of Stalin's 'cult of the personality' still relatively fresh, Fidel Castro was maintaining a total ban on any public display of his handsome features. Now, the face appears on large billboards in town and countryside, as well as on the walls of most offices. No other Cuban leaders are thus exhibited except the dead heroes, Camilo Cienfuegos and Che Guevara. You also note that Fidel — now turned 60, though there's some mystery about his exact birth-date — is white-bearded in current photographs, but still black-bearded on the billboards.

According to Havana-based journalists, Fidel is becoming more withdrawn and solitary, and even ministers have trouble reaching his presence. Gone are the days when he popped up unexpectedly in villages, driving his own jeep, and chatted with the locals. He has also been making some distinctly strange decisions. Recently, annoyed by a Russian failure to deliver a promised quantity of timber, he decided that Cuba would take charge of the matter. So, 800 Cubans have gone to Khabarovsk in eastern Siberia (winter temperature, minus 40 C) to build homes for 7,000 others who will be settled there by 1990 and will devote themselves to felling trees for Cuba.

There's no doubt that Fidel — and Cuba — has plenty to worry about. The root of the trouble is the concentration on sugar production, on which Cuba has depended since the revolution just as much as before. This dependence means that the country still has a cash-crop economy of a typical Third World pattern. Though most of the sugar goes to the Soviet Union, at fixed prices, in exchange for oil and other imports, the vital part of the scheme is the sale of sugar in other (mainly West European) markets for hard currency, to

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buy the advanced technology that the Russians can't supply.

In such markets, the demand is declining and the price is anything but fixed; indeed, it has hit an all-time low of 6 US cents a pound. An unfortunate by-product of this situation is acute competition between Cuba and neighbouring countries with whom Fidel would like to be friendly. Total sugar earnings for Latin-American and Caribbean sugar producers were $6 billion in 1974, and sank to under $1 billion in 1985.

As a result, hard currency imports have been cut to half the 1985 level. And you can bet that these imports didn't consist of luxuries, but of equipment and machinery vital to Cuba's development.

Hitting the norm

A partial solution might be to raise sugar production, so that it at least earns something despite the depressed price. But, despite the introduction of new sugar-cutting machines, output remains stagnant. The 1986 harvest brought in 7.2 million tons, precisely the figure recorded in 1952. The 1987 harvest (mainly because it rained at the wrong time) is unlikely to reach 6 million.

The cutting period begins in September and lasts officially until 30 April, but is usually prolonged into May or even June. During this entire time, the workers are working seven day a week. At the headquarters of the Cuban Trade Union Federation, I had a remarkable interview with Gustavo Gama, Director of Production and Emulation (there's a title for you!). He claimed that it was only the machines that worked seven days a week, not the men with machetes. As I'd been in the countryside the previous Sunday, I knew that this wasn't true. Well, Gama conceded, some workers volunteered to do extra shifts out of 'enthusiasm'. What, then, was the function of the unions? 'We carry out political education in order to stimulate the love of work.' When he voiced this noble sentiment it was nearly lunch-time on a sweltering day in May, and he had done nothing all day but sit in an air-conditioned room drinking rum and cola and talking, first with a visiting Hungarian delegation and then with me. We were a world away from the blazing sun and the sweat of the cane fields.

He went on to explain about 'rectification', a concept that had hitherto baffled me. The earnings of Cuban workers depend on whether they achieve, fall short of or surpass the norm — i.e. the anticipated output for the working day. In recent years, thanks to improved technology, it often became possible for a worker to hit the norm in (say) three hours instead of eight hours. It might seem obvious to a European trade unionist that the workers should share in the benefits of higher productivity . . . but not in Cuba. Any surplus earned by cost-cutting and efficiency, Gama told me, should go to (a) State funds, (b) social and cultural benefits, such as a club-house or a sports field, (c) prizes for the best workers, generally in the form of a trip to Moscow or Prague. Nothing, though, for the average worker.

As for rectification, a process launched in 1986, it meant a revision of the norms so that the worker (in the above example) had to revert to working eight hours in order to achieve the quota. Gama readily agreed that thousands of workers had suffered a sharp drop in earnings. Obviously, the Director of Production and Emulation wasn't affected.

All this, however, is in line with the personal philosophy of Fidel Castro, which in this respect diverges sharply from that of other Communist leaders. One gains some illuminating insights by reading the report of the debates at the (December 1986) Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, in which Fidel frequently intervened. At one point, the report reads: 'He said that if we talked only about improving the standard of living we could unleash a terrible national selfishness. He added that he never even liked the expression "standard of living".' At another point: 'I think that the greatest shame that can befall a man, he continued, is to be dubbed indolent — the greatest shame that can befall any people is to become an indolent people.'

An even more remarkable extract reads: 'He warned that there must be a lot of demagogues of all kinds out there, a lot of opportunists, populists, irresponsible, weak and paternalistic people to have created this great chaos.' What chaos does Fidel have in mind? The chaos of workers falling short of their norms, indulging in absenteeism, and moonlighting to make extra money by unofficial jobs.

Cuba today resounds with stern appeals to the call of duty. At the outset of 1987, Fidel declared: 'This will be a year of trials.' A billboard quotes him as saying: 'We must be more intolerant towards all that is badly done, all that is not correct.' A sign on a motorway bridge reads: 'These are times of work, efficiency and sacrifice' (yet another Fidel quote).

How do the Cubans react? It seemed to me, sometimes, that they were united in passive resistance to Fidel's exhortations. I don't wish to be misunderstood; I had a strong impression that Cubans are broadly satisfied with their social and political system, and also that they regard their extraordinary leader with admiration and pride. In Havana, we are worlds away from the alienation and discontent of Warsaw and Prague, or even the cynicism of Budapest.

Yet one observes, in all sorts of ways, that the response to official appeals is poor or even non-existent. The highways are lined with signs urging the wearing of safety belts, but I never saw a single driver who followed the advice. Smoking is recognised as a danger to health and Fidel has given up the cigars that were his trade-mark, but most Cubans puff cigarettes regardless (including Dr Prado while briefing me at the Ministry of Health). Punctuality is an aspect of the much-plugged 'efficiency', but Cubans invariably show up late for appointments, clearly without even being aware of it.

Some observers who know Cuba much better than I do believe that, ultimately, the people will respond to Fidel's high-minded reliance on the moral incentive, and will mend their ways as he desires. I must say that I found little evidence for this prospect.

Cubans know that their revolution has banished the elemental poverty, the gross injustices and the corruption of the past: that it has given them much in several spheres, notably in health and education. But now they would like more money to spend in the shops — and who can blame them? □

ARTS

CINEMA

The rules and the game

Judith Williamson

Dona Herlinda and her Son (18)
Screen on the Hill, Cannon Piccadilly
Hermosillo Season
National Film Theatre, to 28 June

THERE IS SOMETHING profoundly self-conscious about the concern of both mainstream and oppositional cinema with sex and 'sexuality' at the moment. Gay sex in particular is usually subject either to an irritating coyness — very noticeable at the more mainstream end of the market — or to an equally irritating tendency to statement-making, usually found in the more deliberately political sector. In a society where homosexuality isn't taken for granted, it *is* very hard to present sex between men (or between women) as a simple fact of life on the screen.

This makes it all the more interesting that, 'from the land of the margarita, the taco and the macho' as the publicity puts it (i.e. from Mexico), the work of Jaime Humberto Hermosillo has an extraordinary directness which makes films like *Parting Glances* and *My Beautiful Laundrette* look precious by comparison. Hermosillo's most popular (and most specifically gay) film, *Dona Herlinda and her Son*, is currently playing the independent circuit here and has been widely reviewed; but its opening has been accompanied by a retrospective at the National Film Theatre, which has given an unprecedented opportunity to get a wider sense of his work.

The most striking aspect of Hermosillo's films is their matter-of-factness, not only about sex but about death, bodily functions and the sources of money, aspects of life which most films either gloss over shyly or, conversely, act wildly proud about including. (Of course that look-at-us-we're-so-upfront tone is only the flip-side of the don't-look-now.) In *Deceptive Appearances* (whose plot is extraordinarily like that of Balzac's *Sarrasine*) the owner of the family fortunes is a wheelchair-bound old man, whose infantile state of incontinence and frustrated emotions are presented in a way that's neither patronising, sentimental nor 'political'. (It's almost impossible to imagine an English film in which somebody is found to have shitted their pants that didn't provoke either hysterical comedy *or* a concerned social worker response.) The treatment of this one detail speaks for the tone of the whole film, in which sex, sickness and the making of money are treated explicitly but never self-consciously.

The film's sexual plot — in which a straight man is forced to realise, finally, that the 'woman' he desires is a 'man' too — may sound whacky but what is truly unusual is that it's presented in a completely affectless manner. It's not that the *characters* don't have feelings — but Hermosillo

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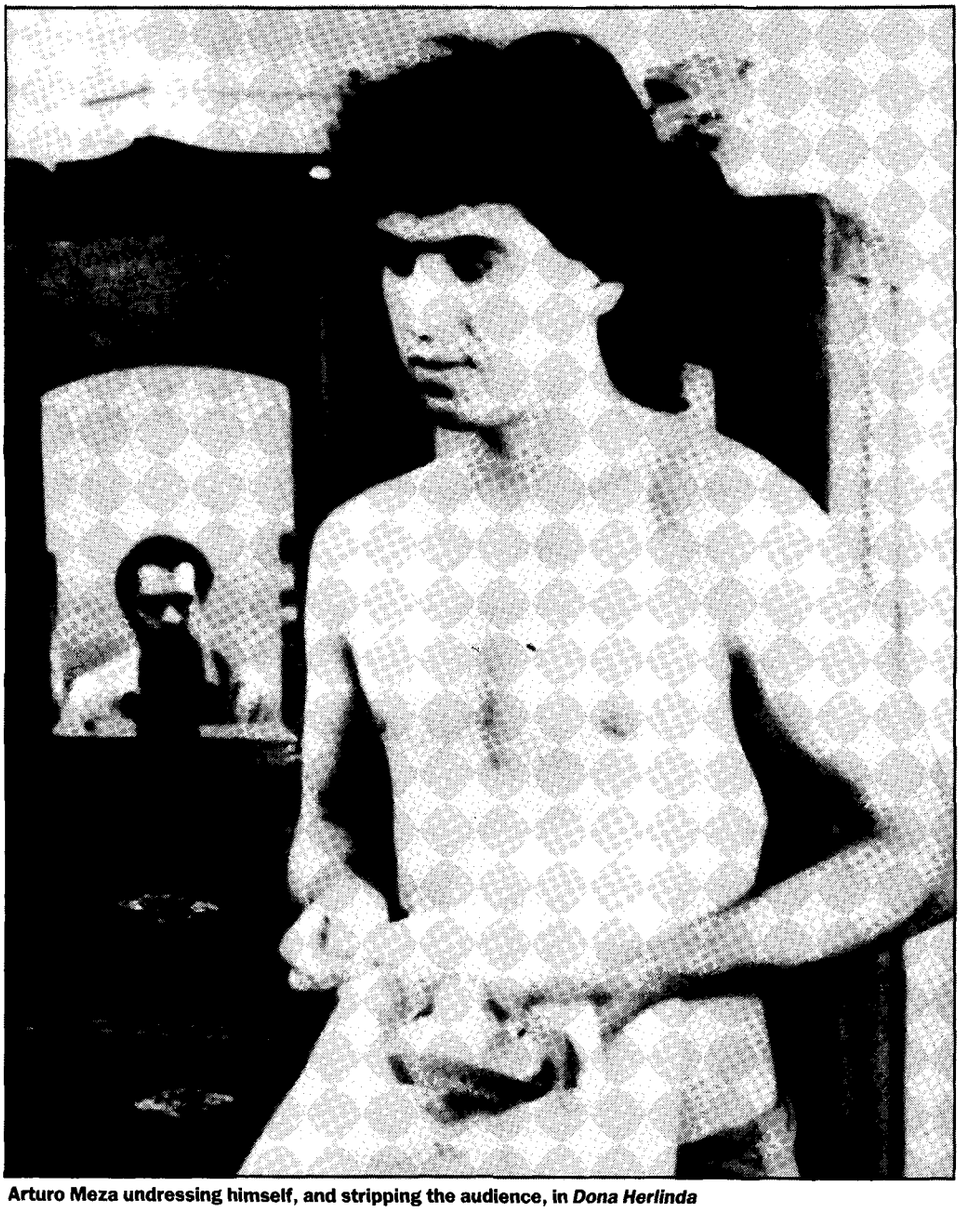

Arturo Meza undressing himself, and stripping the audience, in *Dona Herlinda*

presents them without a structured appeal to ours. *Matinée*, for example, is a film which could have been very cute: two little boys, obsessed with gangster comics, get embroiled with a real gang when one of them stows away in a van, hijacked by the robbers from the other boy's father. The kids end up living with the gang, befriended by their captors, until one of them tips off the police.

This sounds like material for a charming comic movie: yet one boy's father is killed, and the film refuses to switch tone for his death so the audience is left with no clues about how to take it. Two of the gang appear to have a gay relationship, but since they are not shown actually making love this emerges as an emotional fact, through the jealousies that ensue when one of them becomes particularly close to one of the boys. The men die in each other's arms, dressed as priests, while attempting to rob a cathedral; but, again, this episode is signalled neither as comic nor romantic.

Which is not to say the film isn't funny or emotional; but that's not the same thing. We are so steeped in the modes of conventional narrative that we expect a film not only to tell a story but to tell us how to respond to it. It becomes literally hard to imagine love outside of a romantic mode or sex outside of a 'sexy' mode. And it is precisely cinematic conventions which coincide with and reinforce the social conventions that translate the raw materials of physical and emotional life into ways of thinking about them. We are accustomed to films providing us with some ground on which to make moral judgments, and Hermosillo refuses to offer it. What is subversive about his films isn't the fact that you see, for example in *Dona Herlinda*, men undressing and making love (as if they meant it, for once); it's that the *audience* are stripped, left without the comfortable clothing of cinematic codes which, like their social counterparts, provide structures of meaning which keep a vision of the world secure.

The shifting of these structures reminds me of Renoir (one of Hermosillo's favourite directors), with his liberatingly amoral quality, which, ultimately, is an expansion of morality rather than its denial. Hermosillo doesn't have anything like Renoir's visual style; yet a film like *Matinée* has very much the same absence of conventional moral tone as say, *Boudu Sauvé des Eaux*, and their off-beat endings are strikingly similar. *Dona Herlinda and her Son*, in which the conventions of a patriarchal society are shown as completely at odds with actual sexual feelings, yet strangely able to contain them, is reminiscent of *Les Règles du Jeu* where the very fact of portraying the ins and outs of desires becomes subversive.

For film is a medium better suited to showing things than to saying them; and in this lies its specific capacity for challenging social assumptions. There is no *obvious* 'sex-pol' in Hermosillo's films; and yet they liberate the viewer from an enormous number of preconceptions, by showing the supposedly abnormal in an unconcernedly normal way. □

TELEVISION

Sunday best

Hugo Williams

A FEW YEARS AGO Irish Television experimented with Vertical Planning — the designation of particular evenings for comedy, drama, films, etc., allowing, say, your habitual sports-viewer to plan his/her drinking-life with more confidence and eliminating that awful sinking feeling of 'I think there's something good on after the News.' Commercial pressure persuaded the gallant little corporation to abandon its civilising mission, just as it did Iceland TV, whose inspiration was to cancel Thursdays altogether. We are currently eagerly surrendering our own night time to these interests. I hope we are enjoying ouselves, sitting up in bed.

A possible alternative looks as though it may be emerging, if only by accident. What the planners have done — always supposing such people exist — is to let everything remotely worthwhile quietly slide together into a single night's viewing, then hurl the rest of the stuff at the planning-board more at less at random. Our current night in is Sunday, mainly because of **Theatre Night** (BBC2) and its early bedtime of about eleven. But even the daytime stuff is good. We start with **Network 7** (C4), the wonderful new teen rag-bag which clings to your attention by your eyelashes, spewing contradictory captions, graphics and advance announcements across its highly modern format exactly like flicking through *The Face* backwards on the tube (*The Tube*'s producers are responsible for this show). Subjects covered recently have been a bible-thumping (bible-*chucking*) heavy metal band called Stryper,advice from some kind of expert (male) on how to avoid unwanted (male) advances ("'Let's leave it there tonight, Robert,'' then get up off the seat, very important, that.'), a brilliant Mickey Spillane-type animation by *Thunderbirds* inventor Gerry Anderson, items on chanting, Druids, The Mutoid Waste Company, Gay Bikers on Acid and the strange half-life of squatters in a Berlin wasteland; also interviews with Boy George (including near-libellous captions undermining everything he said) and Ben Elton, leaving him with his last words, 'I certainly feel guilty unless I am working', echoing on and on as the credits rolled. ▷

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Staying with Sundays, at 6.40 there is the fanzine for grown-ups, **The Money Programme** (BBC2), which one week scored a coup with a piece about A. J. Patel, tycoon of newsagents, who owns 300 already and is about to purchase another 1,000 from Guinness. 'I sent out a memorandum that our branches will no longer stock Rowntrees, because they have refused to give us the same discount as Tescos.' He seemed like a goody, though one of his retailers feared he was less interested in retailing than property dealing, which seemed fair. Would he guarantee a man his job? 'We would protect his job (pause) unless, of course, there was no job there for him.' (Of course!) I always wondered why all newsagents were called Patel. Now I know.

Last week's money fun was supplied by Howard Hodgson, tycoon of undertaking. H. H. explains the ease with which he has picked up thousands of little family firms and turned them into a Jaguar-equipped lifestyle: 'Death is the enigma subject of the 20th century, so children of undertakers have tended to suffer at school from this enigma: "What's your dad do?" "Oh, how awful!" etc,' — rendering them unenthusiastic for the trade. H. H. is enthusiastic. A Roman Polanski lookalike with long hair, big cuff-links and a buttoned-up, buttoned-down air, he talks smoothly of creating new market opportunities for his trade and planning a more comprehensive service for clients with financial advice for the bereaved. He has just gone public. Let's hope he doesn't get carried away by his 'ability to generate more profits' for his shareholders. His Jag's numberplate is D800 MOB.

Still on Sunday, we have the elongated docu-slot comprising **The Struggles for Poland** (C4), then **Man and Music** (C4) which last week did Mozart with extended interludes for his music, notably a near-bluesey 'Quintet in G Minor' played on authentic contemporary instruments which sounded tougher and more articulate to me, though I am no judge. His symphony in G Minor possessed 'a melancholy bordering on panic' we were told, which his wretched life before copyright and royalty laws seemed to justify.

On the subject of unconscious vertical planning we might note that Wednesdays seem to have accumulated all the eco and animal programmes of the week, fielding **Only One Earth** at 7.45 (BBC2), **In The Shadow of Fujisan** at 8.15 (BBC2), then, at 9.00, the conflicting **Disappearing World** (ITV) and **Odyssey** (C4). In one evening we travelled from Africa via Japan to the South Pacific and Madagascar. Thursdays should by rights be a 'free day' after that little spin.

With Harold Pinter himself in the part of principal villain Goldberg and the late Colin Blakely as his Irish sidekick McCann, not to mention Joan Plowright and Julie Walters as the women, the new production of Pinter's *The Birthday Party* on **Theatre Night** (BBC2) is destined to go down as the definitive version — even though it is Pinter's peculiar talent to write plays that are infinitely interpretable, almost abstract in their lack of received characterisation. *The Birthday Party* is really more of a score for voices than a story, though it does have a plot of sorts. A pianist is holed up in a boarding house when two heavies arrive to lay a 'Birthday Party' on him: a piece of Pinteresque third degree which persuades him to go with them. Curtain.

Your committed viewer may read into these dream events whatever she or he likes about Ireland (McCann: 'You betrayed our land'), the Holocaust (Goldberg: 'You're an overthrow. You're what's left.'), but the pleasure of the piece lies in its zonked but austere humour ('I've got your cornflakes ready') at times amounting to poetry. The only danger is habituation. After an hour, inverted commas are balanced in the air over every phrase ('It goes without saying') and you feel like making up some of your own stuff. □

MUSIC

Androgyny and misogyny

Simon Reynolds

MORE THOUGHTS ABOUT Prince, to acknowledge his arrival a few days ago to make some rare live appearances in Britain, and the fact that 'If I Was Your Girlfriend' (Paisley Park) is one of the strangest hit singles of this or any other decade. There's a particular critical approach to Prince that I find really irritating; soul bores who decide to adopt a schoolmasterly tone: 'There is a . . . harrumph . . . undeniable talent here, granted, but it's frittered away in self-indulgence and conceit. If only Prince would learn self-discipline he could channel that talent and produce consistently first-rate soul records.' The fallacy here is that a constant stream of top-notch, straightforward soul is the goal that Prince is, or *should be*, striving for.

Is Prince part of R&B anyway? Miles Davis has said that Prince's music is jazz, even as it stands; he uses electronics brilliantly, is as much of a futurist as avant-pop groups like Young Gods or Skinny Puppy; he can rock with the best; at other times his intentions are clearly psychedelic. Prince doesn't so much transcend categories as exceed each of them, simultaneously. But perhaps the best tag for Prince is 'hippy', in so far as that term has become, for post-punk critics, a cipher for pretension, over-inflation and over-reach.

Most pop music is created under factory conditions, is product made to satisfy specific consumer needs. Prince has been elevated to a level beyond that of a musician working for a living: there's no one to please but himself. He's often slammed for being a 'spoilt child' — beneath this you sense a puritan suspicion that his music is play rather than 'good work'. Post-punk criticism is deeply uneasy about music that isn't tied to the grassroots, or to a good intention or specific function. But Prince has floated free of roots or use value into an aristocratic, aerial domain of licence and luxury — an orgy of chaotic sylistic miscegenation.

Prince sings mostly of sex, soul's staple, but does such violence to the mannerisms of passion that he exceeds the stable notion of the flesh that you find in contemporary soul, its simple model of relationships as give-and-take exchange. Having learnt the signs and conventions of soul's representation of sexual passion, Prince exaggerates and refines them, inducing a kind of meta-ecstasy: we hallucinate a rapture more vivid than any reality could provide. In search of the voice that can match this impossible, hypersexual experience, Prince plays truant from the basic soulful thrust, the early rasp that most people think 'soul is all about', and uses his voice like a jazz instrument. On 'If I Was Your Girlfriend' he even uses studio trickery to alter drastically the pitch of his voice, and credits this 'other' voice as though it were a separate performer, Camille: here is a desire so over-extended and polymorphous that it disperses into schizophrenia.

The subject of the song is interesting too — Prince musing that men would be closer to their women if they could only be like a girlfriend (helping each other choose what to wear). The song's agony is that of the spirit chafing against the straitjacket of sexual identity. Of any identity. In Prince's mad, scatty voice we glimpse the dizzying possibility that the ultimate goal of desire is not to be *human* at all. The flesh in Prince's music is not the firm, reassuring flesh you find in soul, but something ghostly and vaporous; sex isn't 'communication' but an almost mystical experience, the dissolution of the differences and identities which make communication possible. Prince alarms critics because he doesn't travel along the steady, secular path of the human (social commitment, regular passion) but inhabits the extremes on either side — either too religious or too frivolous for words. A flighty genius, who can't be pinned down.

If Prince melts sexual difference (into a fluid, utopian world of androgynous bliss), hip hop freezes sexual divisions, hard. Another difficulty for 'soul-cialists': these critics have to reconcile their pleasure in hip hop with their guilt over its sexism and violent individualism. They imagine a kind of perfected hip hop, severed from misogyny. This is bad faith, a blindness to what is actually in front of you. Hip hop is the sound of the masculine ego in crisis, threatened on all sides, retreating into a protective fantasy of omnipotent self-sufficiency. Women can only participate in hip hop by taking on this viciousness and redirecting it against men and other, rival women (as Salt 'N' Pepa do). They can't change the substance, because the emotional vocabulary of hip hop (what makes it what it is) is rooted in a male individualism that can *only* define itself as *against* the 'female' (tenderness, co-operation, vulnerability) music can only shore up its identity with an endless series of victims.

All this is embodied in the very sound of the music: beats like the pelvic jerks of rock 'n' roll accelerated into machine gun fire, a soundscape of chasms and sudden subsidence as *treacherous* as the environment young Blacks have to survive. But the real bad faith is that most critics fail to admit to themselves that it's precisely the *cruelty* of hip hop that is so mesmerising and addictive.

Here are two state-of-art hip hop masterpieces. LL Cool J's *Bigger And Deffer* (Def Jam/CBS) sees the 18-year-old rap megastar getting sucked further and further into an upward spiral of exaggeration; each boast, each triumph *has* to be grander than the last, and so we get strange lines like 'I'm badder than Napoleon, Hitler or Caesar'. Schoolly D's *Saturday Night! The Album* (Flame), on the other hand, is all about the ease, the languour, of mastery — at times he'll rap a line in a kind of murderous swoon. But the DJs — LL's Cut Creator and Schoolly's Code Money — really

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deserve equal billing, for transforming a load of pirated R&B licks, '70s funk squiggles, doo wop trails and heavy metal riffs, into the perfect unstable environment for the frontmen to dramatise their survivalist prowess against. 'You gettin' in my way/You will be destroyed.' □

THEATRE

Foreign bodies

Victoria Radin

Hamlet
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE *Lyttelton Theatre*
Miss Julie
AUGUST STRINDBERG *Lyttelton Theatre*

I SLOPED OFF uncertainly to see Ingmar Bergman's **Hamlet**: Bergman plus Hamlet in Swedish must equal gloom, greyness and over-intellectualisation. Not at all. The harsh gaiety of *Fanny and Alexander*, Bergman's last film, is present here. In fact his version — and it is a version, for he takes great liberties — might be called 'Ophelia and Hamlet', for he gives equal weight to the young girl who, alone among Ophelias, actually frightened me. When not speaking, she appears in the background, even after her own death, as a silent witness to the events we see. She is the moral centre of the play; not Hamlet.

Bergman has a little joke before the play begins. A red curtain goes up, followed by two others. The music is tinkly-drawing room and we're reminded that theatre is a game about illusion and that we're about to watch a play which treats this theme directly. Thereafter there are other reminders: Gertrude costumes Ophelia for the nunnery scene and Hamlet often visibly adopts a face for the different unfriendly faces that he meets. But within this conceit life is direct, passionate, brash, even cartoon-like. The stage is emptied to the back wall and surrounded by a black false proscenium arch. In this wonderfully lit and clean rectangle — a cinema frame — Bergman makes beautiful pictures with his actors, whom he often places in profile. The connections between them emerge clearly. Although filled with ideas and illusions, the basic drift of the thing is so lucid a child could understand it. Perhaps we need to see our classics in Swedish to be able truly to comprehend them. Perhaps what we really need is to have non-English speakers mess with them.

Claudius and Gertrude tumble across the stage in their first scene dressed in saffron colours, like two particularly unsavoury followers of the Rajneesh, and proceed to copulate in the dog position. A row of masked, red-robed judges applaud them. They are Bergman's weird interpolation, a silent ungodly crew of authority figures whose disintegrating features are a constant reminder that something is hugely rotten in the state of Denmark. And things go from rotten to worse. When Fortinbras enters to survey the final carnage he comes not as a healer but as a stormtrooper surrounded by riot police and a television crew to record his speech, which is delivered as a mindless rant to blaring rock music. From muddles, Bergman seems to be saying, springs the new barbarism. It blasts one back to the present world and strikes the only note of real pessimism: it is also daring, high-spirited and, when one remembers that Bergman is now nearly 70, young. Hamlet is above all the quintessential adolescent's play.

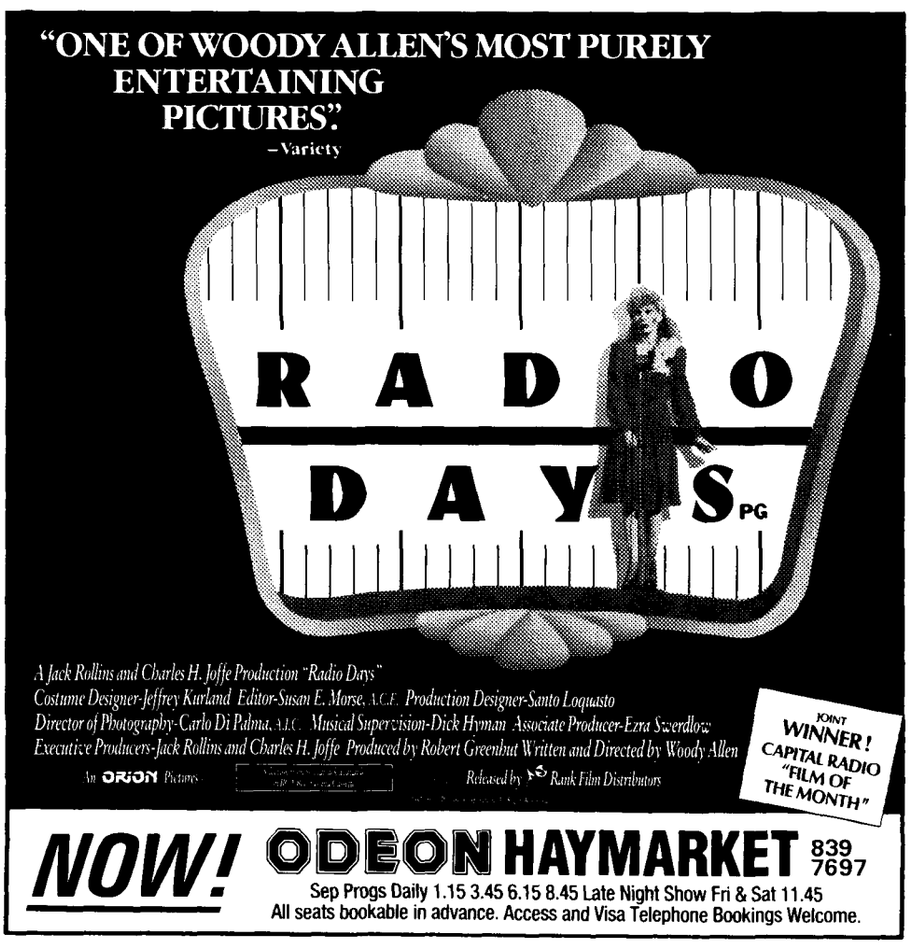
There are other japes: a Rosencrantz and Guildenstern courtesy of Stoppard; a gravedigger who talks to two jesters playing music and finds a very long worm in Yorick's skull. Less of a joke for its own sake is Claudius' drunkenly violent infidelity before he begins his prayers with a Player Queen dressed to look like Gertrude. The transformation of Ophelia, played with extraordinary power by Pernilla Ostergren, is stunning. Initially a plump and carefree girl doggedly in love with Hamlet, she transmogrifies into an ugly Lilith in bovver boots who hacks off her own hair with shears and hands round nails instead of flowers before drowning.

Hamlet is violent, wildly mercurial and undoubtedly a natural leader among the philosophy boys at Wittenberg. Dressed in black poloneck, drainpipes and Raybans, Peter Stormare makes his first entrance stumping a chair across the stage and then plonking himself on it in an exaggerated posture of rage. His get-up, among costumes which suggest all periods but the present, places him as thoroughly modern — even post-modern. You feel he would be *au fait* with Lacan and Derrida. Rage, disgust and a total abhorrence of convention drive him forward; and the tall, stork-limbed Stormare is always exciting to watch: like a better, infinitely sexier version of 20 people one knows. I found him rather self-regarding but then that too is familiar. When Fortinbras wheels off his body to the goosesteps of his followers we lose whatever shards there might still be of western humanism.

Stormare plays Jean in Bergman's **Miss Julie**, which could be retitled Mr Jean. But Kristin, the cook and his fiancée, is also brought forward: played by the tall, well-built Gerthi Kulle with a dignified sense of herself and her sensuality, she becomes a potent rival to Julie and the play a deadly duel of a triangle in which everyone loses. This tactic eliminates a good deal of the neurotic petulance one associates with this most direct exposition of Strindberg's harrowed horror of women; and makes the play much more erotic and dangerous.

Marie Goranzon's stocky, short-haired Julie is slightly butch, a practised seducer who works well with her feet, which are shod in tempting little grey boots, and turns the taking of a mote from Jean's eye into direct assault. After going to bed with him — again, as always, surely the briefest coupling ever to end in suicide — she rushes violently from his room, retching with disgust and drink. Afterwards she yields to a lot of wine and, in a brilliant move, her litany of invective is almost affectionate.

Once again, this is a very physical staging, with Julie's nightmare of falling echoed in real descents to the ground; and Jean's own dream of climbing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upwards adumbrated in the way he puts his head on the breasts of both women, who cradle him as lover and son. Stormare is brilliant here: moustachioed, with brilliantined hair which he is always combing before a little mirror, automaton-like after he's sent Julie off to the barn with his razor, when he gathers together the tea things and those wretched boots for his master like someone from *Modern Times*, straightens up, smooths his hair, and strides forth above stairs. Much of being a servant, like any condition where one must hide one's feelings, is about acting. Both productions have now alas gone back to The Royal Dramatic Theatre of Stockholm; and we must wait until September for the next of Thelma Holt's International Theatre treasures to wave over our fairly stagnant waters. □

Jumping in the lake

Simon Rae

One afternoon, when the fashionable
objectors were gathered under the ilex tree,
the Prime Minister was announced.

He was just in time for tea.
Almost immediately, one of the maids
was reported drowning in the lake.

A smartly-suited private secretary
jumped smartly in, expecting no doubt
a heroic flood up to his chin,

but found himself standing in about
three foot six of muddy pond water.
The maid in her billowing parachutes

was within easy reach, but obviously safe.
Her hysterics masked laughter,
he suspected, and judging by the hoots

of Bloomsbury merriment from the lawn,
there had never been the slightest danger.
Later in the war, when the cowman went in,

there was no Prime Minister's private secretary,
and no mistake. He knew
the hull-shaped channel to the deepest part,

and slogged on in with a brick
in each jacket pocket, and a sack
of horseshoes clutched to his heart.

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WORK IN PROGRESS

Remembrance of things past

Naseem Khan

A NEW ONE, it seems, opens every fortnight. In the 1960s, there were 800 in Britain. Now the 2,000 mark has been passed. Museums have crept up on us in different guises: museums of the moving image, transport, photography, Vikings, Northumbrian smallpipes, even a museum of the kilt. In doing so, they have acquired new characteristics. No longer places with red corded rope, savage attendants and Do Not Touch cards, the new museums encourage familiarity. Touch me, kick me, feel me, beg their notices.

Not so, however, at one of our most intriguing and long-established museums, the People's Palace in Glasgow: with over 300,000 visitors last year, the fifth most attended museum in Scotland. A red-brick pile, it was set up by the local council in 1898 as part of its overall municipal provision for Glasgow and still sits serenely in the grassy acres of Glasgow Green, a fine example of the conjunction of recreation and culture. No hands-on stuff here, though; no tape-slide shows. The floors of the People's Palace are filled to bursting with Glasgow memorabilia, stashed behind glass in cases and cabinets in the old way.

Not that there's any virtue in that, says its curator, Elspeth King. 'Sound and film are very, very important, but we haven't the cash. If we weren't hard up, for instance, we'd have people's experiences in single-end houses and model lodging houses.' As it is, the museum has (among much else) the next best thing: reconstructions of homes, as well as of shops. The Buttercup Dairy (c.1900) is here, and an art-nouveau tearoom designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, discovered when a city-centre shoe shop was demolished. But that's only a fraction of the teeming information that fills the cases. If you want to kow the concerns that have kept this forceful city engaged, then a visit to the People's Palace in obligatory.

Here, for example, are plans and prints of past Glasgow festivals — a timely reminder, with the Gardens Festival due next year. There's the 1901 exhibition that turned the area around Kelvingrove into a fairyland: gondolas and pleasure broughams, fountains and palaces of ice. 'It was supposed,' says Elspeth King drily, 'to be a panacea for the city . . . It's something we've done so often before.' In 1888, to be precise, and 1901, 1911, 1938.

Here, too, are relics from Glasgow's radical history: photos of the huge 1919 rent strike (solemn children clutch placards: 'We are Fighting Landlord Huns'), of the 1971 Upper Clyde shipbuilders' work-in. For it was in Glasgow, Elspeth King's official museum history reminds us, that the first effective trade unions were formed. The museum has rare copies of *The Liberator*, an early trade union-financed paper, and much material from the stalwart *Glasgow Advertiser* (born in 1783 and turned *Glasgow Herald* in 1802). Here too are mementos of the suffragette movement: a card game called 'Panko', an Indian club wielded on 9 March 1914 and, propaganda being timeless, a postcard of a bawling baby with the caption 'Mummy's a Suffragette'.

It is the oddities that give extra flavour to the chunks of social history and the People's Palace has its own distinctive brand of humour. The stuffed Private Towser, a rather dusty poodle, gleams beadily out of his case among music hall bills advertising his talents. He's joined by other Glasgow characters, including a jolly portrait of Alexander Petrie who founded *The Glasgow Clincher*. A thorn in the side of bureaucracy, he outfaced many attempts by infuriated City Fathers to get him certified. Instead, he paraded in front of City Chambers with a placard declaring himself 'the only sane man in Glasgow'.

It would be wrong, however, to regard the People's Palace as merely a jumbled attic of history. Full it is, and cramped; random it is not. Its underlying philosophy is clear. 'We're not about the "treasures",' says Elspeth King. 'You'll find the ordinary here, rather than the extraordinary, as long as it reflects some aspect of the life of Glasgow people.' It is, equally importantly, an explicit museum. Captions point out significances in a way that is helpful rather than obtrusive. 'We never believe that the object speaks for itself.'

A rich and fascinating place, it is still horribly hampered by lack of money — surprisingly, since one would expect a Labour administration to take special pride in the place. However, it appears not to do so. The museum's space is tight; its accoutrements are outdated (cases date back to 1898); its staff is miniscule; its budget is derisory. It receives, for istance, £400 a year for materials, £100 for books, £500 for retrievals, films, conferences and so on. As a result, new acquisitions remain in packing cases. An old weaver's cottage rescued by the staff from Tolcross is still in numbered pieces.

As the tide of development advances, more and more of Glasgow's history is likely to disappear. Already the People's Palace is inundated by offers — 'Folks come here with boxes of stuff they're emptying out of houses' — and nowhere to put it. The museum's problems speak worlds about the place and function of a museum. Who is it for? Does it mirror or interpret? Can there be an active link with local people? For some answers, we should look at two other Glasgow museums, one huge and one deceptively tiny . . . □

Next week, Work in Progress looks at the Burrell Collection and Springburn Museum.

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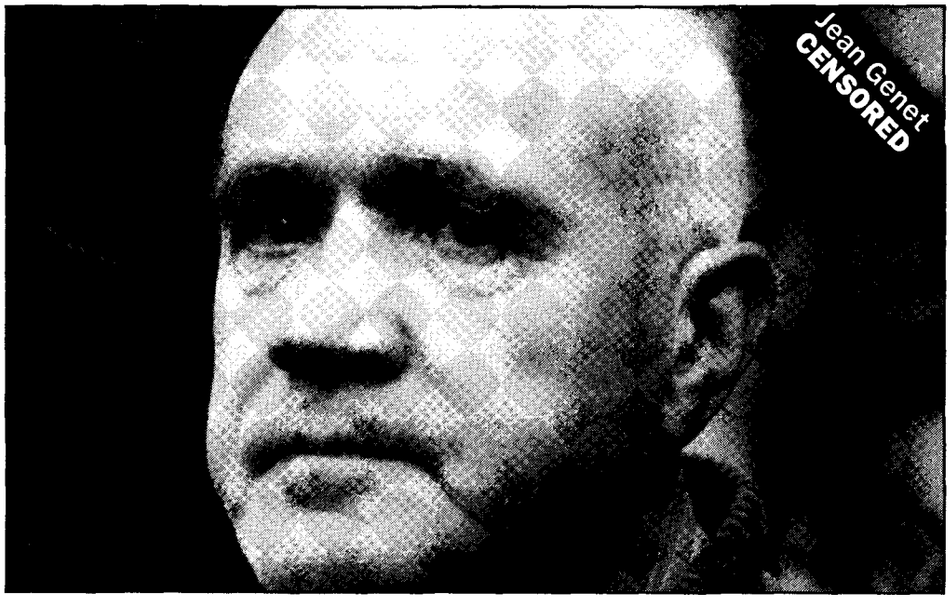
Books

PUBLISHING

Freedom's just another word

Mariana Valverde

On one side, the devil of censorship; on the other, a deep-blue sea of free trade: Canada's bookworld is threatened by dangers of which we in Britain should take note



Rex Features

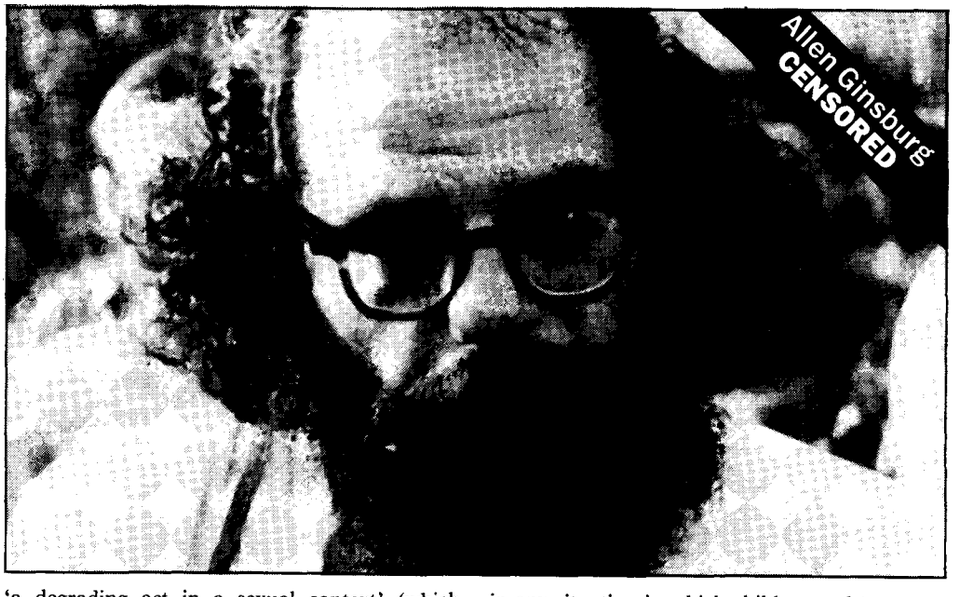
AT A RECENT Toronto demonstration against Canada Customs' confiscation of gay and lesbian books and magazines, an inventive woman initiated the slogan 'Free Trade in Lesbian Books!' This peculiar chant pointed to the contradiction in current Canadian Tory policy on publishing and culture: while Prime Minister Mulroney zealously pursues a free trade agreement with the United States, which will probably result in terminal illness for the struggling Canadian publishing industry, his Justice Minister and the minister responsible for Customs are engaging in an all-out attack against pornography, alternative erotic material, even educational material on Aids.

This two-track policy of supporting Hollywood while undermining alternative culture became clear during the winter of 1986-87, when, in scenes which will not be unfamiliar to British readers, the largest gay bookstore in the country (Toronto's Glad Day Books) began to have its shipments of imported books and magazines routinely seized at Customs. Practically everything is now held up for two weeks, and many periodicals and books are never released because it is claimed that they are obscene. 'Obscene' materials have included books by Jean Genet and Allen Ginsburg, ancient Greek homoerotic poetry, a book on the Nazi persecution of homosexuals and the main three US books on lesbian sexuality (*The Joy of Lesbian Sex* was eventually released as bookstore owners appealed the original decision). Many gay soft-porn magazines had pages ripped out or words blacked out: most notorious was a list of 'safe sex tips' in an article on Aids which presented to the Canadian gay public four readable sex tips and six blacked-out ones.

Recently, Glad Day Books used *The Joy of Gay Sex* (which has been selling in regular bookstores for years) as its test case, and challenged the customs ban in the courts. The judge declared the book to be not obscene; however, he did not strike down the provision under which Customs officials operate and therefore put the onus on the small struggling business and its supporters to spend yet more money in legal, book-by-book challenges.

The attack on gay materials — an attack carried out not by means of criminal-code obscenity charges but under administrative, non-public provisions — has now given way to a much larger onslaught that will affect writers, artists, film makers and distributors, publishers and art gallery owners. This is the new pornography legislation introduced in parliament by Justice Minister Ramon Hnatyshyn on 4 May.

The new bill (which has yet to go to the House Justice Committee) provides stiff penalties against the production or distribution of 'pornography', a new legal category. Under this rubric are included depictions of violent conduct, any depictions of sexuality involving people under 18, depictions of 'a degrading act in a sexual context' (which includes consensual bondage and sex with vibrators) and, last but not least, 'any visual matter that shows . . . masturbation or ejaculation, or vaginal, anal or oral intercourse'.



Camera Press

The bill does more than prohibit everything under the broad category of pornography. As Louise Dulude, president of the National Action Committee (Canada's largest women's coalition) stated in a radio interview, the law also twists the feminist distinction between pornography and erotica. 'Erotica' is defined in the bill not as depictions of mutually agreeable, non-coercive sexual acts, but rather as nudity 'in a sexual context'. Erotica is not the opposite of pornography — as in the feminist approach — but simply a milder version of it: there is no legal recognition of positive sexual representations. Erotica is defined only in order to be criminalised in any situation in which children and teenagers might be exposed to it. Selling *Playboy* to a 17-year-old would become an extremely serious offence. Furthermore, as writer Pierre Berton stated in a 5 May press conference on behalf of the Writers' Union, the law does not allow any defence on the basis of artistic or educational merit whenever people under 18 are involved (either as models or as customers).

A lawyer familiar with obscenity law

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commented that the law might also affect the distribution of sex education materials in schools or teenage clinics. Another lawyer told a representative of the Toronto Public Library system that libraries would probably have to establish and police 'under-18' and 'over-18' stacks due to the lack of strict definition of the offence of 'displaying' erotica to people under 18, as well as the clause banning any 'matter' (including books) allegedly 'encouraging' many specified sexual activities.

The new bill has been severely criticised even by feminists who favour government regulation of pornography. At the annual general meeting of the National Action Committee (NAC) on 10 May in Ottawa, Canada's feminists passed an emergency resolution strongly condemning the bill and suggesting alternatives.

A coalition has been formed in Toronto to continue the fight against the bill and to press not for minor amendments but for a withdrawal of the bill altogether. Some feminist groups are members of this coalition, while others favour trying to gain some amendments that would restrict the definition of pornography to depictions of violent and 'degrading' material. Whatever the eventual result of this debate, feminists, artists and writers are organising in unprecedented ways to discuss state policy affecting them.

Writers and artists have also assumed a greater public role in the protracted national debate on the question of free trade. The Canadian cultural scene is overwhelmingly dominated by American imports (and American TV beamed directly across the border). Film distribution, for instance, includes a mere three per cent of Canadian films, the vast majority of the remaining 97 per cent being US films; the book industry has between 20 and 30 per cent Canadian content. Canadians are able to publish books and magazines on Canadian or other topics largely through a system of policies that favour investment in Canadian film production, that provide arts grants to publishers and authors and that generally give a small boost to an otherwise economically distressed sector. Very few of these incentives for an indigenous culture are actual tariff barriers, and so do not necessarily have to be affected by the abolition of customs and tariffs agreements between Canada and the USA.

However, the American trade negotiators have made it increasingly clear that they seek also to abolish what they describe as 'non-tariff barriers' or 'unfair subsidies' — which range from welfare-state provisions to subsidised health care. The arts community fears that the USA would pressure Canada to stop giving even minimal aid to Canadian publishing: for instance, the only major news weekly, *Macleans*, exists only thanks to a provision that allows Canadian business to deduct the cost of advertising in Canadian magazines but not in American magazines distributed in Canada.

Writers and publishers have not been reassured by repeated government statements that 'cultural sovreignty' is not on the negotiating table. Both Trade Minister Pat Carney and Communications Minister Flora MacDonald have denied that they would allow the USA completely to overwhelm Canadian culture. However, the chief US trade negotiator made a unilateral statement in which he said that everything was on the negotiating table and that Canadian publishers ought to look forward to free trade because it would give them access to the American market. Since Canadian publishers have great difficulties both maintaining alternative publications and keeping Canadian ownership of successful, mass-market enterprises, this was rather a disingenuous statement.

The trade negotiations that are expected to culminate in a free trade agreement in the autumn of 1987 are not being conducted in public and it is thus difficult to know whether the worst fears of the arts community are justified. However, recent cutbacks to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation may indicate the government's lack of commitment to a Canadian cultural and informational alternative. Together with the attack on alternative erotic material embodied in the new pornography bill, the free trade talks may be a sign that Prime Minister Mulroney would rather boost his sagging popularity by dazzling Canadians with American 'entertainment' than by seriously supporting distinctively Canadian cultural voices. □

FICTION

To end them all

Michelene Wandor

The Rat
GUNTHER GRASS *Secker* £12.95

WHAT DO YOU GIVE the writer who has everything for Christmas? In this book, Grass posits a request for a pet rat. She is duly delivered to the narrator, cage and all, is placed in his study, between desk and filing-cabinet, and proceeds to invade his dreams, his imagination, and to inspire a new novel. In the narrator's dreams the She-rat recounts rat history: recalling Noah's Ark,when only rats were excluded from the ship of survival. Cunningly, they managed to hide and, when the new world began again, they took up residence everywhere. She points out that in times of historical turmoil the rats join the Jews as scapegoats for historical evil. She tells how the Paris Commune in 1871 was a watershed in rat history, when her fellow beings were eaten, persecuted, and began being used for laboratory experiments. All in all, she indicates, the underbelly of rat history demonstrates the evils of human history — people, she claims, are obsessed with death, seeking only to find more and more means of self-destruction, self-immolation, suicide.

Meanwhile, back in daytime, the writer weaves his own fictions, which become inextricably involved with the rat's obsessions and influence. From the collective cultural store he draws fairy tales: the Grimm Brothers and their creations, Hansel and Gretal, Snow White, an armless girl, Rumpelstiltskin serving as a waiter, the Seven Dwarfs as successful pin-striped gents. In between writing, he listens to the Third Programme, taking in music and news reports, which, as times passes, he cannot distinguish from fiction.

From his own cultural history the narrator/Grass recycles parts of his own imaginative baggage. Oskar from *The Tin Drum* and the talking fish from *The Flounder* reappear, the appropriate number of years on. Oskar, now a successful businessman, is directing a film about the preservation of forests. The flounder warns a ship crewed entirely by women of the impending end of the world. The ship, on which the women knit incessantly, is searching for the city of Atlantis and, when the women think they have found it, they are blown up into a mushroom cloud.

The text is interspersed with poems — elegies for the world, bitter prayers for survival. The imaginative tour de force has a curious effect. The stuff of the debate between man and rat (man perceived here ironically and self-consciously as 'male' — hence his serious attempt to 'write' a group of women who don't always behave as he would like) is fierce, apocalyptic, painful. The rat has always left the sinking ship, the argument goes, because 'man' is doing the sinking and the rat wants to survive. Two fingers to the 'man'. But 'man' fights back; his imagination, even by dint of creative images of crazy destruction, proves itself to be alive and reproducing. There is an extraordinary section in the middle of the novel where all the fairy-tale characters literally go berserk, as if film were speeded up, intercut, re-ordered and re-imagined.

Grass has written an apocalyptic novel which goes further than any of his other work in plumbing the dangers of our nuclear age; the book is dark, bitter, witty and somehow warming. It asks the obvious fundamental questions — Who controls the world? Who controls the imagination? — but, instead of anguished romanticism, does it with the realism of its own convictions and the convictions of its own imagery. It could have been the novel to end all novels, after which the rest has to be silence, except that the narrator reminds us that we cannot only imagine horror, but hope. The dream of a different future still haunts the writer, and who is to choose between writer and rat? □

FICTION

Heart and stomach

Kathy Page

The Passion
JEANETTE WINTERSON *Bloomsbury* £10.95

JEANETTE WINTERSON SLIPS easily from the past to the present, from the plausible to the fantastic and back again. Her first novel, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, was the largely autobiographical account of her upbringing by an adoptive mother who wanted her to be a missionary. The second, *Boating for Beginners* — drawing on a wealth of biblical influence — was set at the time of the Flood. Although very different, both were characterised by the wit and agility of the story-telling voice. Neither quality is lacking in *The Passion*, but this latest novel has a concentration of purpose that sets it apart from the others. The passion in question is not Christ's, neither is there more than passing reference to any kind of organised religion, yet this novel is written

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with an intensity and a degree of repetitiveness that give it a strongly evangelical flavour.

The action takes place during the Napoleonic wars and spans the continent of Europe, but *The Passion* is not concerned with history. There are people with webbed feet in it, but it is not a fairy story. It's a novel about one word: the noun of the title. 'Only connect the prose and the passion and both will be exalted,' Forster wrote in *Howards End*; this essentially poetic (and evangelical) aim is the driving force of Jeanette Winterson's book.

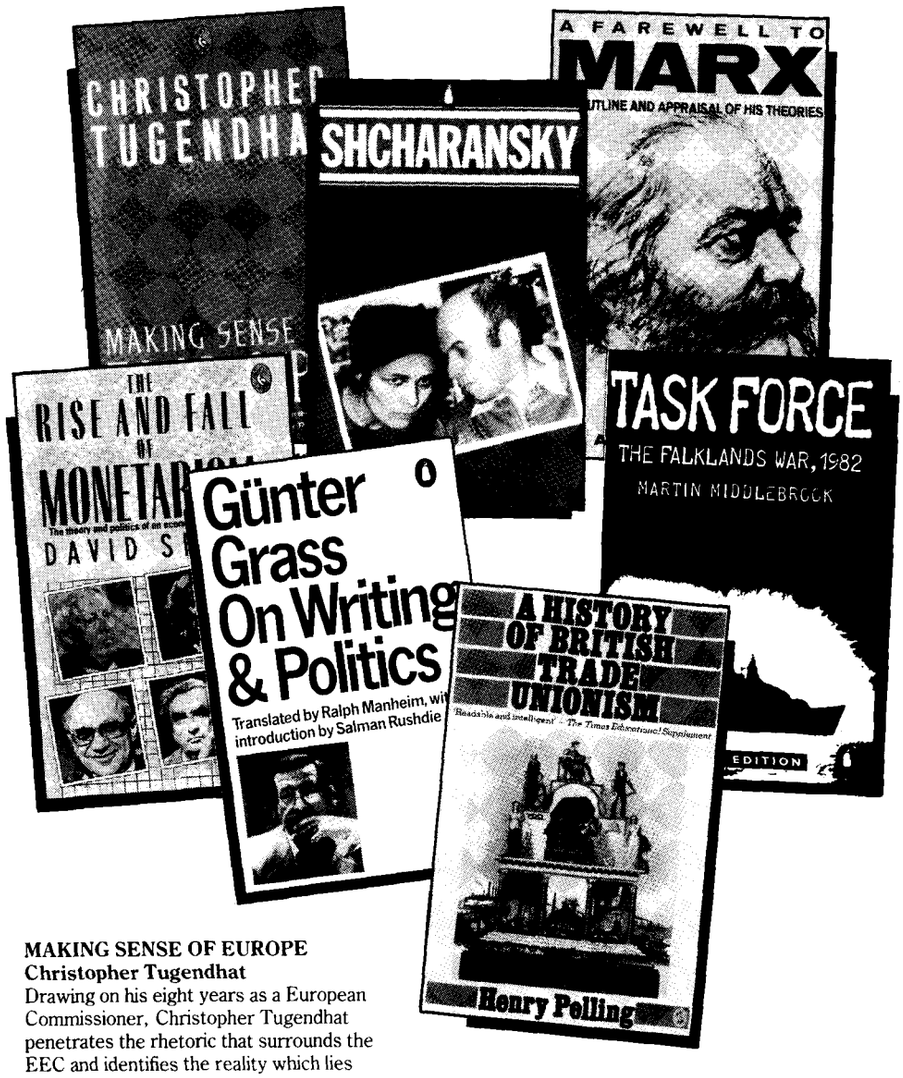
The word passion, with its breathy 's's and connotations of illicit desire, is a pleasure to read and hear in the mind's ear. In this book you will read it, and the imagery of conquest it trails in its wake, many, many times. Passion is a demon which the two protagonists, Henri and Vilanelle share. Like Napoleon himself, it's a ruthless commander and its effects are as devastating as the scourge of Europe. The passion is of the romantic type and lurks 'somewhere between fear and sex', also 'somewhere between god and the devil'. How does it arise? What common need does it satisfy in the essentially ordinary Henri and the exotic Vilanelle? The book is not interested in such questions; it aims to convince without argument.

From his final resting place — solitary confinement in San Servelo — Henri writes: 'our desire will lift us out of ourselves more cleanly than anything divine.' Passion here is a matter of faith: submit and be saved. Though their stories are different, Henri and Vilanelle speak with one and the same voice: 'I'm telling stories. Trust me,' they command by turns — the tone, like the emotion invoked, is relentless and hectoring.

Henri is Napoleon's cook. Ventian-born Vilanelle is a transvestite and gambler; she loses her heart to a woman who beats her at cards. Disappointed that the intensity of her love is not returned, she marries. She travels the world with a brutal and repulsive husband who eventually sells her as a sexual slave to Bonaparte's generals. So it is that Henri and Vilanelle meet in Russia. Moscow is burning; Henri has grown to hate Bonaparte as fiercely as once he loved him. Accompanied by Patrick, a lascivious priest gifted with telescopic sight in one eye, they desert.

On the long trek through endless winter to occuped Venice, 'the city of mazes', which (like another city often mentioned: 'the city of the inerior') cannot be charted, many tales are told: a heart is found beating in a jar; Vilanelle walks on water; lives are lost limb by limb and cards and tears turn to jewels. Despite this proliferation of stories, *The Passion* is a novel of atmosphere rather than incident and an invocation rather than an exploration. Jeanette Winterson is not in the business of creating or reworking myth to reveal pyschological or social realities.

Passion, says Vilanelle, is 'sweeter split strand by strand'. For the fainthearted — or, as Henri puts it, 'lukewarm people' — the best approach will be to take this hymn to desire strand by strand (there's a bookmark for the purpose) and read it for enjoyment of the writing. Bloomsbury have packaged it to appeal to the epicure and, in this respect, it doesn't disappoint. Jeanette Winterson has worked the narative into a glittering setting for her ominous meditations on the nature of passion, and the language she uses, whether solemn and latinate or brief and to the point, is vivid and tightly controlled. □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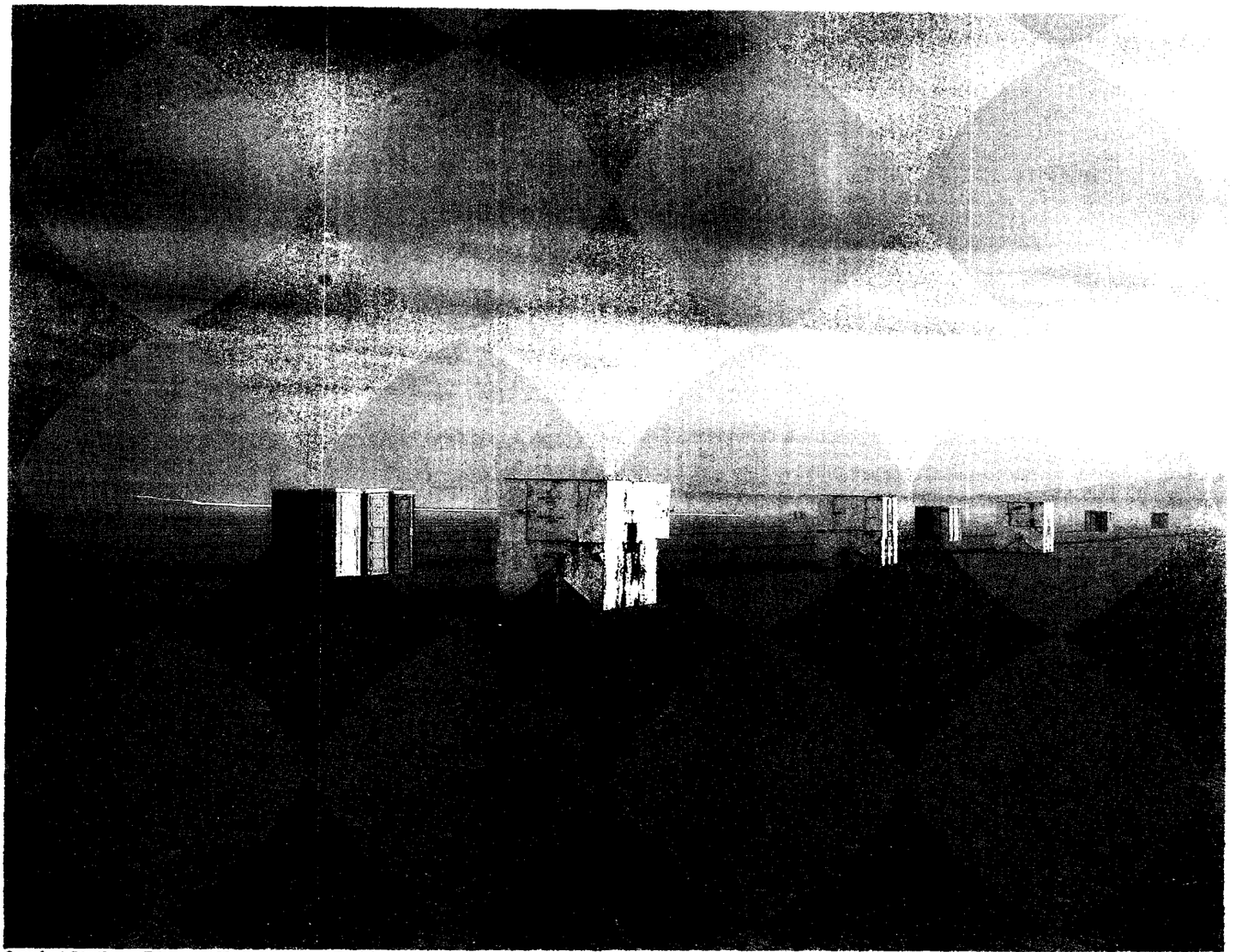

Comfort Stations, Edwards Air Force Base, 1983: photograph by Richard Misrach from *Desert Cantos* (University of New Mexico Press, 1987)

HYPERREALITY

Asleep at the wheel?

Meaghan Morris

In which Jean Baudrillard, influential chronicler of the death of politics and history, the real and the social, goes to America and rents a car

'EVERYTHING DISAPPEARS faster and faster in the rear-vision mirror of memory . . .'

In Baudrillard's *Amérique*, a driver's experience of the acceleration and disappearance of images becomes something like an allegory of Life. At least, of Life in modern America as observed by Jean Baudrillard. But the same comment might just as well serve as an allegory of the experience of reading Baudrillard's books — faster and faster to get through, harder and harder to retain. A few hours after closing *Amérique*, little remains beyond a few blurred images of freeways and deserts and telescreens flickering in empty rooms, an insistent echo from the rhythms of his prose, and a nagging sense of malaise.

An effect like this might be just what the author was seeking. After producing over a dozen hefty books and a number of furious pamphlets in some 20 years as the professional *enfant terrible* of French sociology, Baudrillard has began to work equally hard at playing the Disappearing Theorist. He has progressively and deliberately abandoned the protocols of systematic research, scrupulous argument, thesis formulation, 'critique' — in favour of a style of personal *jotting* (and jaunting) about the world. For some, the result represents the emergence of a writer and thinker of great originality, while for others it epitomises the defeat of analysis by burble in the fashion-field of postmodernism.

Either way, Baudrillard's trajectory is now taking him straight toward the standard romantic genres of adventure and discovery — travel writing, the *carnet de voyage* (*Amérique, L'autre par lui-même*) and, more recently, the Writer's Notebook (*Cool Memories*)*. With a gesture appropriate to any writer heading in that direction, all three books announce Baudrillard's renunciation of the Academy. Henceforth, he'll be a travelling man, a Ricky Nelson of theory — gazing out as he goes at the 'desert of the real', reading the world, not the library.

BAUDRILLARD MAKES a distinction between '*le travelling*', the modern practice of pure circulation, driving for driving's sake, and '*le voyage*', the old-fashioned habit of seeking a destination, and arriving. *Amérique* is about travelling. *L'autre par lui-même* — Baudrillard's formal defence of his academic achievements — is presented as an 'imaginary voyage'. The only way to 'simulate' arriving at the end of a coherent project is, says Baudrillard, to discover his own works as though they were documents of some lost civilization which he tries to reconstruct.

However, anyone who looks to this slim volume for a summation of Baudrillard's *oeuvre* will be sadly disappointed. In fact, most of it reads more like a word-processed assemblage of offcuts, outtakes and second-hand sentences from *Les stratégies fatales* (1983) and *De la séduction* (1979). There are brief, static rundowns on the buzzwords of the late Baudrillardian thematics — ecstasy, communication, obscenity, metastastis, indifference, seduction. Only in the last two chapters is there any sense of a voyage, any hint

* Amérique *(Grasset, 1986).* L'autre par lui-même *(Galilée, 1987).* Cool Memories *(Galilée, 1987).* For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign *and* The Mirror of Production *are both published by Telos and available from Compendium and other good bookshops.* In the Shadow of the Silent Majority *and* Simulations *(Semiotext(e)/Foreign Agents) are distributed by Central Books, though the former is currently out of print. Baudrillard's essay on French students was published in the* NS on 6 March this year.

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that Baudrillard's project might have changed in the past 20 years. All trace of that phase of his work still of most interest to radical social theory today — the critiques of Marxism and semiotics in *For A Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (1972) and *The Mirror of Production* (1973) — has been rigorously removed.

It's often said that Baudrillard's work can be divided into two distinct phases. The first was a systematic study of the commodity form in so-called consumer society, followed by an abrasively argued attack on the labour theory of value and on the work-ethic enshrined in Marxist concepts of 'production'. This double-edged critique of the production/consumption couple was dealt out in one of the more acerbic tones of post-1968 French *gauchisme*. A searing contempt for the inadequacies of Marxism is combined with a passion for the gestures of radical utopianism in everyday life.

A different note begins to emerge with *L'exchange symbolique et la mort* (1976). Notions of consumption give way to models of 'simulation'. Contemporary reality is now seen to be generated in the image of an Image, as more real than real (hyperreal, like retouched corpses in funeral 'homes'). At the same time, an interest emerges in archaic regimes of signification — 'symbolic exchange' in primitive societies, seductive games of appearances in pre-modern European cultures (and, says Baudrillard in *Amérique*, in Italy today). The value of *reversibility* begins to replace that of *opposition* to theorise a method of action. It comes in two different techniques: simulation (the parodic aggravation of an existing state of affairs, the ecstasy of making things worse) and seduction (the provocative practice of fatal allure, the art of 'survival make-up'). Both are used by Baudrillard as techniques of writing.

This kind of schematic division easily creates shorthand myths of a Good and Bad Baudrillard — the radical critic of neo-capitalism on the one hand, the post-political fashion figure on the other. It also ignores a number of continuities in his work.

L'autre par lui-même discusses one of these, the interest in a theory of Objects (rather than 'the subject'). *Le système des objets* (1968) was in many ways the book that some still wish that Roland Barthes had written instead of *Mythologies*. Heavily influenced by Barthes, it combined a study of the mythic 'speech' of objects with a social theory of technology *and* of consumer practice. By the time of *Les stratégies fatales* (1983), Baudrillard was expounding an ironic myth of something like what my mother used to call the Object Conspiracy — objects are actively hostile to humanity, and lose themselves on purpose. For Baudrillard, the flight of the object from the subject's search for meaning offers exemplary hope — in a warped sort of way — for escape and survival in the world of simulation.

Two other points of convergence between Baudrillard's early and late work might be described as temperamental, rather than theoretical. One is a profound suspicion of the effectiveness of 'critique'. In his second book, *La société de consommation* (1970), he was already arguing that the 'morose and moralising' discourse of critical opposition was in fact a necessary component of consumer mythology. His own move to methods of simulation and parody is probably a logical extension of, rather than a break with, his early radicalism. The other point is a fascinated ambivalence for much of the contemporary culture that he claims to describe. Parts of *Les stratégies fatales* on the wet, steaming, pornographic, promiscuous obscenity of the world of videos, racial mixity and sexual liberation should count as some of the most ghastly pages of cultural criticism produced since Adorno's shell-shocked comments on American popular culture.

ONE OF THE novelties of *Amérique* is that this rhetorical dislike of the excessiveness of moist, messy things is absorbed by a myth of America, and of modernity, as a 'desert' — natural, social, cultural. Baudrillard's is a *dry* America — a collage of images of harsh light, infinite distance, endless horizontal circulation, political indifference and, of course, simulation. The chapter on New York is the most perfunctory in the book, with routine notes on its verticality and centrifugal force, and stray comments of the order of 'he who eats alone is dead'. The real energy of *Amérique* is elsewhere, in the 'expurgated' and 'exalting' vision that the West allows of 'the desertification of signs and men'.

'Desertification' really means the disappearance of European values. For, in a clever twist, *Amérique* is written by a fictional Parisian, an inhabitant of the capital of the 19th century, abroad in America's 'realised utopia'. Baudrillard presents himself as a new De Tocqueville, and his *Amérique* is fundamentally a book about France. Its explicit central question is 'How can one be European?'

His stance as fuddy-duddy Frenchman allows Baudrillard to recycle some astounding museum-piece arguments about whether America is 'uncultured', 'vulgar', 'stupid' — voicing, for example, ancient anxieties about television destroying conversation and family relations. It's another exercise in simulation ('in a naive country, you have to be naive'), and sometimes it still produces those luminously cold descriptions of oddness in everyday life that can make even the worst of Baudrillard's writing so entertaining — like his pages on the 'toothpaste effect' of smile-politics under Reagan, and on yuppy culture as an integrated freeway circuit (POOR PEOPLE MUST EXIT).

Mostly, the anthropological fiction is used to plaster a 'French' (that is, Baudrillard's own) sense of political disillusion all over the American landscape.

The method of argument is by Catch-22. Thus, Old Europe is defined as *the* culture of History, Ideology, Politics — the 'scene' of reality and difference. Hyperreal, ob-scene, throughly modern America is, by definition, post-historical, liberated, utopian, and indifferent after the orgy of desire in the 1970s. Consequently, any signs of historical thinking, political opposition, or critical spirit in America today can simply be treated as throwbacks — an embarrassing 'aping' of European ways by insecure American intellectuals. There's no way out of that one, and it's easy to see why Baudrillard's itinerary depends on an assiduous avoidance of conversation with flesh and blood Americans on — or off — the freeway.

The trouble with this is not that a sense of grim acquiescence in the status quo is the logical effect of the method. Baudrillard does try to see new passions and new modes of being emerging in the desert. He also argues that the greatest threat to America today is the apparent collapse of the ideologies of contestation — the 'antibodies' of democracy — that once sustained its moral power. (The book does not resist the inevitable comparison between Aids and the state of contemporary capitalism).

The realy awful, depressing feature of *Amérique* is the intellectual complacency that requires this flattering yet mortifying image of the fabulous American Other. There's a touch of self-loathing to it, though most of the loathing is directed towards Baudrillard's intellectual Others in France. But, above all, *Amérique*'s anti-academic discovery of the weird post-political wasteland depends precisely upon a comfortable academic insulation.

Baudrillard describes certain American campuses as 'foetal' security spaces — nice people, nice trees, nice radicalisms all growing together in isolation from the rest of society. It's a biting image, with a certain sting of truth. Yet Baudrillard's car on the freeway has its own foetal effect and, as he rolls along watching the landscape fleeing from his rear-vision mirror, he raves about the spectacle with the monomania of the lonesome hero who hears no other voice but his own.

But this travelling man is no Mad Max. There's no sense in Baudrillard's glass bubble that anything nasty might happen, or impinge, if it does, on him. His America is 'desert-ed' not only of people, but of incidents — no accidents on the freeway, no dramas in the motel, no strangers in the car. Disasters happen distantly, as data or as television: so many symptomatic images of the curious fate of other people (like the 'forgotten', 'disenfranchised' Third World excluded — again by Baudrillard's definition — from the Franco-American romance, and therefore fading from view).

Writing of the remarkable immunity to scandal enjoyed by contemporary governments, Baudrillard notes the part played by exotic military operations as publicity to restore public confidence. Lebanon and Grenada are given as examples of the 'political unreality' which for Baudrillard is invading the 'void' of modern politics, condemning those outside the American consensus to effective disappearance.

In one way, this may well be a reasonable comment on the function of wars in one place as news in another. If there is a death of imagination and a failure of empathy for others involved, Baudrillard would claim that such 'indifference and impatience' was not his own, but 'the world's' (*L'Autre par lui-même*). Yet the insularity of his travelling depends precisely on ensuring that he is never, even in fiction, in the wrong place at the wrong time. His adventuring intellectual is always watching the news, never caught in the war. His car, alas, remains an armchair. □

NEW STATESMAN INDEX

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FICTION

Lighting the lamps

Liz Heron

The Day of Judgement
SALVATORE SATTA trans. PATRICK CREAGH
Collins Harvill £10.95
A Woman and her Family
MARIA MARCONE trans. ETAIN ADDEY *Women's Press* £8.95 & £3.95

IN A COUNTRY unified only in 1870, it's not strange that regionalism should haunt its literature, still alive to the geography of power. Classics of this century like Sciascia's Sicilian fictions, Carlo Levi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli* and Ignazio Silone's *Fontamara* have unearthed in the landscapes and life of Italy's South the historical bedrock of its poverty. Levi and Silone indicted not only the Fascism of their period, but the unjust legacy of an earlier one. In all of these writers we can see the complex roots of an even later Italy.

Salvatore Satta himself occupies a footnote to this modern time, as the eminent jurist who rewrote the Penal Code after WW II. He died in 1975 and the unfinished manuscript of **The Day of Judgement** was published posthumously. Told in the third person, this is a fictional memoir of Nuoro, the centre of Sardinia's remotest region and the scene of Satta's youth and childhood (and setting for an earlier regionalist, Nobel prize-winner Grazia Deledda). It combines the detail of social history and the personal ambiguities of autobiography.

Through a haze of melancholic remembrance the town assumes the sudden contours of everyday life at the turn of the century, its surrounding landscapes humming with the fragrant intensity of a Mediterranean spring or burned with stony dryness, the characters on its stage handed vivid life. Satta's descriptive powers shine, at times with a truly magical lustre, as in his story of the lamplighter's round — where children vie to catch the spent matches from each oil lamp. Its passing is briefly mourned after the irreversible marvel of electricity caps Nuoro's towering streets in simultaneous light; until a nearby village, famed for its wine and the un-Sardinian gaiety of its people, buys the discarded lamps and, across the valley, renews the slower nightly spectacle of illumination, now watched from above.

The canvas stretches across some two decades, its anecdotes and cameos clustering to form a self-contained world of peasants and shepherds, prostitutes, fools and villains, drunken schoolteachers and pious spinsters that is only gradually touched by influence from outside. Above it presides a landowning class and, for all his intelligent asides on properly relations, for all his passing judgments on greed, it is from firmly within its ranks that the narrator speaks, overseeing Nuoro from the house of the rich notary Don Sebastiano, patriarch and father of seven sons.

It's a critical voice, at its gentlest imbued with a sardonic fatalism that can't ignore inequality, but sees it in the nature of things, only ever to be equalised on the road to the cemetary. But, as death enters with greater frequency, Satta's tone becomes more aggrieved. If he blames the patriarch for the acquisitive compulsion that leads to benign neglect of wife and family, his real bitterness spills out towards freethinkers and socialists (who only appear as liars and hypocrites). The godless get short shrift, whether they challenge the rule of landlords and lawyers, or fall prey to the superstitions of paganism that survive among the island's poorest, in barbaric rituals of appeasement against hunger. This brutal Christianity decrees against divorce — 'hatred makes marriage more indissoluble than love'. Its publishers compare *The Day of Judgement* to Lampedusa's *The Leopard*, Italy's first post-war best-seller, published in 1958. In the epic intimacy of its nostalgic conservatism the comparison fits, although this is a lesser book, its initial pleasures shrivelled by arrogance.

The patriarch's wife filches change from his pockets rather than ask for what he would readily give, for, though their property is shared, he disposes of it. In Sardinia, Satta explains, 'women do not exist'. Maria Marcone's **A Woman and her Family** comes as a riposte to contemporary female subordination, but it's a disappointing one.

Set in the southern town of Bari, its first-person story describes a marriage between two teachers, Maria and Franco, socialists now in their forties and with a teenage son and daughter. Their family life, shaped in part by patriarchal tradition and the conventional expectations of a wide but close-knit circle of relatives, strains against Maria's feminism. Parental conflicts produce severe identity crises in both adolescent children and 16-year-old Marta sinks into anorexia. Written in a hackneyed sociologese, whose relentless absence of texture and refusal to individualise characters seems almost perverse, this map of family oppressions has nothing left out, but all of it feebly imagined. Pallid as fiction, it lacks even the human detail that can lift the case study into moving recognition. □

MUSIC MAGAZINES

Dead souls

Martin Chalmers

BRITAIN'S WEEKLY POP press — *Melody Maker, Sounds, New Musical Express* — has made an incalculable contribution to the vitality of British pop music in the last 25 years. No other country has music papers which combine such lengevity, such large circulations and such frequency of publication with a claim to critical independence. Put another way, the music press is even more dependent than the record companies on finding new groups and new movements and this, in turn, has promoted an unusual degree of competition and turnover in the British music scene.

The inkies' most successful period was the 'before and after' of punk. The music press didn't create punk, but it was responsible for the speed of its dissemination to Britain and the world beyond. Punk was what the *NME* in particular had been waiting for: a re-assertion of the spirit of youthful revolt in music against the conservative control of the major record companies and the re-establishment of a connection between music and 'real' politics.

Unfortunately, for all the spit and excitement, punk actually proved to be a key moment in the integration of music into the global marketing of the leisure industry conglomerates. Packaged as 'new wave' it marked the transition of pop music from a coding for rebellion to pop music as a phenomenon which saturates our late 20th-century world. The music press has never recovered from the fact that its championing of critical forces helped to facilitate that development.

The crisis of confidence has been very evident at the *NME*. It is no longer an opinion former or a innovator in writing about music. Instead it has become dominated by a somewhat sour sectarianism, largely adopted from *The Face*, which tries to square the 'right' consumption (mainly London soul boy clothes and tastes and a restrictive definition of 'black' music) with the 'right' politics (a kind of would-be working-class left Labourism.) To this orthodoxy it is virtually impermissible, an admission both of poor taste and reactionary politics and even of racism, to like the Smiths as well as George Clinton.

By contrast, the *Melody Maker*, once the unfortunate inheritor of jazz and rock maturity, has experienced a degree of rejuvenation. It took the traditional path of recruiting bright writers from the little magazines which succeeded the underground press. If on off weeks it still looks a bit like a boys' own paper, it has allowed Simon Reynolds, David Stubbs and Frank Owen to produce a series of articles which represent the most intelligent attempt to fight a way out of the music press's contradictions since the *NME* went stolid. Simon Reynolds' and David Stubbs' attack on the suffocating effect of the conventions and mannerisms of soul in current music has become particularly notorious. But, in a period of retreat to safe notions of 'truth', 'authenticity' and 'meaningfulness', these articles have rescued the music press as a place for the critical confrontation with the noise and sounds which we buy and which surround us.

But the squeeze on the music papers' confidence and sales has also come from new kinds of publications. Glossy style and leisure magazines

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have tried to adopt the stance of the music press (along with a large number of their writers) while incorporating music as only one element, if an important one, in the leisure package. They take very seriously the old women's magazine task of educating the reader to better consumer taste, only now the main target is not the young housewife but the young male. Inevitably, there's a dilution of what makes the music papers, at their best, worth reading. Glossy paper demotes the text it seems, and good taste is intimidating. Their music coverage itself has become largely uninteresting, falling victim to the search for some fictitious advertiser-friendly middle ground.

The style magazines fill the racks in the railway stations and newsagents. But, despite their shiny newness, they already seem tired and predictable. *The Face* was the first, and was the innovator, not least of the style radicalism equation (the notion that 'these tasselled loafers kill Tories' as Simon Reynolds and Frank Owen memorably put it). But now that everyone — or at least every magazine — has style, *The Face* no longer looks distinctive beside *Blitz, Arena, i-D* and *Q*.

They have their differences of course. I can't quite decide whether *Q* with its old-new rock values and worship of anything big — big sales, big audiences — is the dullest, or *Arena*, with its astonishingly literal attempt to be a men's magazine without porn. Probably *Q*, although all these magazines have the occasional readable article or column. *Blitz* is probably the best of the bunch. The reason is largely Paul Morley, because his interviews/dreams/fantasies have a wit and humour dreadfully absent elsewhere. (In a recent interview with Tom Jones, he had the Welsh singer run over by a milk float after a night of drinking and darts.) The style magazines drew on the music press, but they also copied magazines like *Vogue*. And one of their least attractive features has always been humourlessness.

Not that I'm immune to a desire for luxury. I used to buy *Vogue* occasionally for that very reason. But there seems to be no magazine which combines the need for luxury with critical intelligence. The style magazines seem to be especially unaware of the degree to which they are slavishly imitative of American models. In that, they contribute to one of the strange paradoxes of London in recent years. On the one hand London is one of the main centres of the global selling of leisure, yet at the same time it is becoming more provincial. While the film pages and token books pages faithfully respond to any American sales pitch, Europe has become reduced to capuccinos and Beck's beer adverts. Why this 'good taste' should be seen to be a guarantee of radicalism when allied with 'soul' music has been one of the mysteries of the '80s.

Finally, I want to mention two publications which are far from presenting an image of luxury, but nevertheless have strengths missing elsewhere. First, *Maximum RocknRoll*, which is a messy, black and white, cheap-newsprint, monthly magazine published in Berkeley, California; a compendium of reports and reviews of punk and anarchism from around the world. Much of the music to which it is devoted bores me, the stance of 'victim' frequently disturbs me, yet I'm still moved by the energy and internationalism it reveals. The record reviews are always entertaining and never longer than five lines, and it's full of the kind of apparently useless information that lodges in one's mind forever. For example, the fact that the Eco-Guerillas of Dogwood Lane, Boulder, Colodrado are planning a US Eastern and Midwest tour.

Equally internationalist is the *Re Records Quarterly*, which combines a 12" LP and a magazine. The seriousness with which it addresses questions like the relationship of music and technology is sometimes stimulating and sometimes opaque, and the relationship between the often delightful music and the theory sometimes unclear (to me). Nevertheless this area, between pop and classical, between improvised and traditional forms, is one of the most important lines of development in music now. □

Maximum Rocknroll *from Rough Trade, 130 Talbot St, London W11;* Re Records Quarterly *from record shops or Recommended Records, 387 Wandsworth Rd, London SW8.*

SEX

Inside out

Sara Maitland

Intercourse
ANDREA DWORKIN *Secker* £10.95

A BIT OF ME is just stunned; I do not know what to say. Adrift on the vast sea of Dworkin's rhetoric, forced inevitably to measure what she says against personal experience, to think about intercourse — my own because she offers nothing of hers — sucked into a prose style which has itself many of the rhythms, surgings and poundings of the literature of sex, it is hard to surface long enough to focus on what this book is trying to say.

However. First, *Intercourse* is not about intercourse; it is about male, heterosexual penetration. There is I think an important difference. In Dworkin's gloomy world view the penis is not simply the sign of male power, it is *the* direct instrument of it: we women everywhere and everywhen are bashed and degraded into submission by the hatred with which men wield their mighty sword. They hate themselves, they hate us and we are to be daily punished. But it seems to me there is a problem here: what with the 12 or so per cent who are gay, and the vast numbers who are too old, too young or simply, through choice or lack of opportunity, aren't getting any, sexual penetration would be an extraordinarily risky method of ensuring male power.

The problem is that Dworkin, as became clear in her earlier writing about pornography, does not distinguish between a sign (symbol, metaphor, discourse) and the thing or act so signed. With pornography I was willing to give her the benefit of the doubt: although she failed to prove her case I find myself accepting that there is a link between porn and physical violence against women. But here the problem raises its head in more acute form. Is the description of 'the fuck' in literature the same as being 'fucked'?

This is not a rhetorical question: it is an epistemological one and Dworkin's rampant rhetoric cannot address it. From her own evidence as well as the evidence of my senses and my struggles to write fiction I conclude that they are not the same. The first five chapters of *Intercourse* are literary critical essays on the role of penetrative sex in the writings of Tolstoy, Kobo Abe, Tennessee Williams, James Baldwin and Isaac Bashevis Singer: and she takes the literary expression of sexuality to be the same thing as the activity of the couple next door. But I am unconvinced (partly because she does not even seem to acknowledge that there is a question to be asked). What she does prove, did she want to, is that sex is loaded and carries a massive weight of socially constructed meaning, so intense that there is no literary description of sex which is simply that. (But there is no literary description of *anything* which is simply that: literature and reality are not the same things.) After these essays Dworkin cheats: she goes on to compare the tragedies (a literary form anyway) of Joan of Arc and Emma Bovary. It is clever because Joan's status is somewhere between the imaginative and the real, between literature and biography. Once Joan has been slotted into the framework the step forward to 'all women everywhere' is a smaller one. And we drown in verbiage which fails to make the distinction.

I do not think that Dworkin is deliberately dishonest; I do not think that the relations between the sexes, in bed and out of it, are all that good. I do think — indeed I know — that the violence, the lust for power and the guilty self-hatred in many men express themselves on the flesh of 'their' women; I acknowledge with anger the profound sexism of many 'great' authors (even Tolstoy); I do believe that the meanings of sex are socially constructed and supported by law in all its manifestations. But Dworkin concludes:

> The next question — a real and a fascinating one — then is: with women not dirty, with sex not dirty, could men fuck? To what extent does intercourse depend on the inferiority of women?

Her implication is clear, but I want to say that rabbits manage it very well. Of course sex is not purely biological, but it is also biological and, if there is no intercourse, there are no babies — with or without willies. It is, surely, the social inferiority of women — economic, legal, symbolic — that makes heterosexual penetration a dangerous terrain for so many of us, not the penis that creates and determines the social inferiority of women. I sure as hell hope so, anyway. □

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More light from the right

Dr Stephen Haseler, Founder Member, Institute for European Defence & Strategic Studies

Your reporter seems to be less interested in informing your readers of the scholarly work of this Institute than in the fact that the IEDSS is funded in part internationally, and in particular from an American private foundation (*NS* 29 May). This source of funding — according to your report — appears to be viewed with some scepticism. I cannot understand why. It seems quite natural that an institute dedicated to international and defence issues should achieve some of its support abroad.

If, however, your reporter takes the narrow and parochial — and bizarre — view that any British academic or opinion-forming institution that receives funds from abroad should be investigated you might do well to include an examination of the funding of a whole range of British institutions, from some of our leading universities through to the other major international affairs institutes located in London, and also through to at least two of our major daily newspapers.

Your correspondent had better realise that we are now living in a new era, one in which Britain (no longer the centre of a great empire, an imperium off which the British left as well as the British right have smugly and snugly lived for years) is part of a western system. As such I see no problem at all in funding derived from the private sector of major allies. There certainly would be reason to raise eyebrows should funding come to similar British institutions from the East bloc or its associates.

However, I suspect that your problem (indeed obsession) with us has more to do with the fact that most of our writers tend to support multilateral nuclear disarmament, whereas most of yours do not. But, in order to be absolutely objective, you will, no doubt, now proceed to investigate the source of funding of organisations — most of them way below the intellectual calibre of the IEDSS — which tend to support unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Tip of an iceberg?

Bob Brooks, Croydon

I have for years been amazed at how easy it is for foreign nationals to vote in our elections. (*NS* 12 June). In the EEC Referendum my girlfriend (now wife) who is French received, along with all other residents at the Croydon YWCA, a voting card. In this election all the residents at the Queen Alexandra House, Kensington Gore, SW7, received polling cards. Many, to my certain knowledge, are not UK citizens. I have recently spoken to a French citizen, married to an Englishman, who sat on a jury. She has never taken British citizenship.

I am sure there must be hundreds of similar examples. If one considers the problem of electoral registration and the state of the current electoral registers, with different local authorities investing widely differing resources in compiling accurate registers, one wonders how much this could affect the results in some marginal seats.

Paid by the bracket?

Judith Altar, London SE22

Is Ian Penman (*NS* 19 June) paid by the , or (the) bracket [. . .]? (Or is it another one of his little jokes?)

Point, counterpoint

Ray Whitney, MP for Wycombe, Bucks.

In his desperate and unsuccessful attempt to rebut the charges levelled against him by Dr Julian Lewis, Duncan Campbell (Letters 12 June) gets himself into still deeper trouble in making the allegation: 'As far as the use of MI5 information by the Conservative Party is concerned Ray Witney (*sic*) MP has acknowledged that this was indeed the source of the material about CND members that he prepared for Michael Hesletine (*Ed. sic*) to send out'.

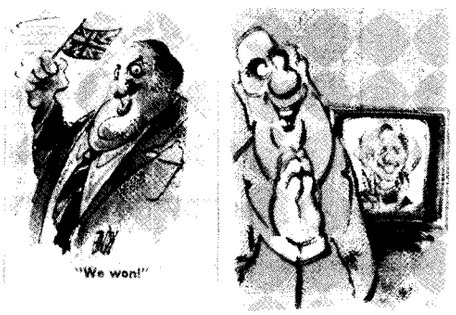
There is no truth whatsoever in these assertions. The information about the political affiliations of CND leaders was openly available to anyone who cared to collate it — which is what I, my research assistants and party colleagues did. It therefore follows that at no time have I ever 'acknowledged' that the source of this information was MI5; nor was the document which I issued in 1983 (just before the *last* election) and which is now again — just before this election — of such interest to Mr Campbell 'prepared for Michael Hestletine (*Ed. sic*) to send out'. It was prepared for the information of my constituents, who were rightly interested in the political forces at work in CND.

It is another demonstration of the strange obtuseness of the left that they affect to believe that those of us who have followed developments in CND would only be able to identify the leftist inclinations of much of the CND leadership with the aid of the security services. Who do they think they are kidding?

Duncan Campell comments: Former MI5 officer Kathy Massiter has testified how she prepared a dossier on the CND leadership at the Conservative government's request, and then passed it to a special Ministry of Defence section, DS19. The then head of that section has acknowledged (to the *Observer*) that he then passed the MI5 information on to junior defence minister Peter Blaker. Blaker has informed the *Observer* that he then passed the material on to Whitney, after which Whitney wrote a letter about CND which was used by Michael Heseltine.

It is, however, correct to say that unlike Blaker, Whitney has not actually acknowledged his use of MI5 material, and this was an error. Readers will note, however, that Whitney's letter does not actually deny using such material, only that he has admitted doing so.

A brave warning



Right: from Sunday *Star* 14/6/87; Above: from Saturday *Star* 13/6/87

Drs Judith Masters & Richard Rayner, Johannesburg, South Africa

The jubilation with which the results of the British election were received by the South African government, is illustrated by the above cartoons published in the Johannesburg *Star*.

These rather cynical cartoons may convey to the British public something of the foolishness of the choice they have just made. Here in the deep south, where social stratification is so clearly defined, and the power so obviously concentrated in the hands of the few, we are fully aware of the implications of Margaret Thatcher's form of government. For South Africa, the problem has gone far beyond peaceful resolution: apartheid will not die without a bloody war. Will British people heed the warning?

South Africa was not always like this. Once, soon after the disastrous election of 1948, the National Party could have been voted out of power. Now, they have entrenched themselves constitutionally. Repression has grown slowly

DRAW WINNERS

The winners of the four cases of wine offered to respondents to our Reader Survey (5 June) are: J Shotton, London W14; J Baker-Rabe, London W11; N & J Marshall, Shrewsbury; B Faux, Dyfed.

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but relentlessly, and human rights have been gradually eroded. Social awareness among the whites has steadily been dulled by the nationalist controlled media, and by the abnormally high standard of living to which whites have become accustomed. Consciences have been salved by the simple expedient of blaming the lowly condition of the blacks on their own 'inadequacies'. Thatcher appears to be moving towards a similar system at lightning speed.

It is remarkable to us here that British voters can actively choose to continue with a policy that can only lead to a system of government as abhorrent as that which currently pertains in South Africa. How far away is your first State of Emergency?

Debating Dahrendorf

Cllr Ronald G. Young, Chair, Strategy Committee, Strathclyde Regional Council

Ralf Dahrendorf's article (*NS* 12 June) deserves to spark off a long overdue debate about the most realistic ways of dealing with the perennial problem which has been variously dubbed the 'inner-city issue' or the 'North-South Divide'.

There really is no excuse for the 'reinventing of the wheel' which passes for policy and debate on the issue in this country: it is after all 20 years since a Labour government first launched the urban programme (and effectively urban policy). Over the period there has been rich experience as both community organisations and local authorities have experimented with new approaches: these experiences have posed major questions about political and bureaucratic practices and philosophies, some of which have been spelled out at considerable expense in academic studies. But all, it appears, to little avail.

Here, for example, in Strathclyde Region (Britain's large local authority) we have been developing since 1976 a social strategy which has very explicitly been based on Dahrendorf's thesis viz

- no 'macro' solution is available for the long-term unemployed;
- the need is for 'community' rather than 'government' initiatives;
- innovative 'educational' projects are needed to boost people's confidence;
- individuals and groups crucial in the change process need to be identified and given appropriate support.

What has concerned us over this period, as we have implemented and reviewed these policies and their impact, is how little interest editors and journalists have taken in such local policy ventures. They are seen as either too complex or 'parochial' — not the stuff of serious politics or academic endeavour (for an honourable exception see the current issue of *Local Government Studies*). Here is a major issue. The government is accused of being centralist: but in many ways this simply reflects the centralist attitudes and structures of the media, academia and political parties — centralist both geographically and philosophically. Is the Labour Party *really* willing to help build up local initiatives — undermining its patronage and control? Are professionals and administrators in local government and health going to continue to play King Canute in the face of the demand for consumer influence if not power?

Notwithstanding such vested interests the Region's social strategy makes progress which throws important light on the questions and issues raised in Dahrendorf's article. And in its comprehensiveness and duration if not coherence the Strathclyde strategy is unique. Despite this, however, national media attention has concentrated instead on the technocratic work of the Scottish Development Agency whose image machine would have Britain believe that they and they alone are responsible for the new-found vitality of a once blighted Glasgow.

The recent Glasgow renaissance has been called 'Britain's first major post-industrial success'. The reasons for this, however, challenge the comfortable assumptions of left and right alike. They go something like this:

a) the replacement in 1974 of a dinosaur of a centralist local authority (Glasgow Corporation) by 2 authorities who, in concentrating on different aspects of the Glasgow urban problems, could begin to make problem-solving *manageable*;

b) the invitation by a Labour government in the same period to the Region to develop a Regional strategy which made local authorities start *thinking* and *talking to one another* and *the community*;

c) the decision then to *concentrate* Regional and Scottish Office *resources* on Glasgow;

d) the encouragement by the new SDA of a joint enterprise culture;

e) the commitment to *fund community enterprise* which over the period has released energies and developed skills in the 'underclass' and served to reaffirm their social citizenship.

Unfortunately, none of this has prevented unemployment levels reaching 50 per cent in many housing schemes, nor has it inspired the private sector to make a relevant contribution. But it is a major start which recent discussions about the inner city ignore.

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ATTRACTIVE, COMPATIBLE Partners, carefully screened, for educated romantics. Personal attention. Reasonable fees. HEDI FISHER Introductions, 45/46 Chalk Farm Road, NW1. Tel. 01-267 6066, w/e 01-504 4142. W21.5

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COVENTRY BASED, Punjabi Indian, clean-shaven professional gentleman 48, financially sound, progressive left-wing views, seeks sensitive/caring, homely female companion for permanent relationship. Box (26)5139. W26.10

DATELINE'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY accurate introductions lead to pleasant friendships, spontaneous affairs and firm, lasting relationships including marriage. All ages, all areas. Free details: Dateline Computer Dating. Dept. (7NS), 23 Abingdon Rd, London W8. Tel. 01-938 1011. N49.20

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GRAHAM (36), seeks affectionate girlfriend with sense of humour — someone who's perhaps normally too shy (or too proud), to reply to ads like this. Interests include: books, walking, politics. Based West Midlands. Box (26)5138. W26.12

LIVELY 27-YEAR-OLD trapped inside 47-year-old body, seeks like-minded man (Oxford/London area), who enjoys: music, travel, old buildings, pub food and adventures. Box (26)5159. W26.13

MALE, 41, missing warmth and intimacy in unhappy marriage (separate rooms — eventual separation likely), seeks attractive, sensitive (non-Tory) female for caring relationship — first advertisement — London. Box (26)5158. W26.14

NOT-UNATTRACTIVE WOMAN, tall, 35, intelligent, somewhat serious, loving but marooned; seeks equine-tolerant, outgoing, kind, secure, not-unattractive man, initially for friendship — perhaps a lasting relationship? Box (25)5110. W25.32

NON-SMOKING single man, 37, seeks adventurous, broad-minded female companion for travel on canals. Be my first mate and let's have fun afloat. Box (26)5167. W26.15

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ORDINARY MALE, 28, wishes to meet friendly, caring female, 20-30, with a view to a fulfilling and lasting relationship. Interests: travel, food, books, politics. Box (26)5140. W26.16

OVER 50 OR 60? Is there a gregarious, good natured man, who would like the company of teacher's widow. Presentable, slim, travelled. Likes: theatre, gardens, poetry, swimming. Some background details please. Box (26)5125. W25.33

PROFESSIONAL MAN, PhD, 30, author, likes: travel, country music, theatre — seeks sincere girl for relationship/marriage. London based, can travel. Box (26)5147. W26.17

PROFESSIONAL OVERWORKER (London, 20s), seeks better ways of spending his time. Please be female, warm, young-ish, independent. I'm OK-looking, bright, caring, thoughtful, not that confident. Box (26)5155. W26.18

PUSS NEEDS STROKES. Feline female, lovely home, seeks pedigree tom with musical leanings. Munch smoked Salmon by fire. Any age to 50. Exeter-Southwest. Box (26)5141. W26.19

RENAISSANCE MAN, 29, 6ft, graduate, ex-RN officer, fit, healthy, extrovert personality, Christian principles, ludicrous sense of humour. Likes Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Verdi, Supertramp, Rembrandt, Titian, Velasquez, Manet, Miss Piggy, Milton, Shakespeare, Masefield, Saki, Hornblower, Gandalf, Aslan, skiing, singing (tenor), horses, theatre, countryside, travel, stimulating, arguments, warmth and companionship. Seeks exuberant, practical, cultured, chaste, single, Rubenesque woman (20s?) in woolly jumper, for blissful union and progeniture. Herts. Box (26)5129. W25.34

SHALOM! Are you looking for an attractive, unusual woman in touch with her feelings and her body? Then I would like to meet you. Do you enjoy walking on the Heath, listening to the sound of the sea, Mahler, Mozart, Beethoven? ... talks by the fireside; contemplating in the silence of a summer's night? I am fair, petite, slim, young 50, and love D. H. Lawrence and Kahlil Gibran. Box (26)5161. W26.20

SOUTH BUCKINGHAMSHIRE male, 31, graduate, seeks lady for sharing. I have interests in walking, cinema, books, writing, wining/dining, but I'm open to suggestions. Box (25)5128. W25.35

SUSSEX WOMAN, 48, enjoys music, arts, countryside, seeks humorous man (under 55), with faith, hope and charity in life for friendship/outings. Photo appreciated. Box (26)5137. W26.21

THOROUGHBRED FILLY, kicked down stable door, needs experienced rider with gentle hands. No cowboys! Canters in lovely Devon/musical airs. Fun essential, age irrelevant. Box (26)5142. W26.22

WOMAN: ageing hippy/anarchist tendencies, 44, fairly attractive, enjoys: socialising, rock music and politics. Wants to meet a like-minded man for a giggle and see how it goes! East Midlands preferred. Box (26)5156. W26.23

WOMAN, 54, widow, teacher, man-loving feminist. Need Summer-holiday (or longer!) male companion. Arts/Cultural interests particularly drawing and painting. Write fully with photo. Box (26)5124. W25.39

YOUNG MAN, tall, slim, fair, bearded, fit, clean, innocent, discreet, needs refined, elegant, highly attractive older woman who's secretly audacious, lewd, powerfully seductive. Afternoons, London. Box (26)5157. W26.24

PURSUITS

SUMMER HOLIDAY somewhere warm? Woman teacher 50ish looking for lively holiday companion(s) m. or f. General cultural and artistic interests. Suggestions and ideas welcome. Write fully Box (26)5136. W26.4

PERSONAL

ARTIST seeks loan of semi-derelict cottage, reasonably remote. Box (26)5144. W26.2

UNATTACHED AND OVER 40? Dinner date for a different way of meeting people. Details: 01-994 4655. W23.5

AGENDA

FOR DETAILS CALL JANET BANKS 01-739 1645

Deadline: 2pm Mondays

FRI 26 JUN

SHAW SOCIETY. Hayward Morse on 'Shaw, My Bete Noire' — Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. Coffee 6.30 p.m. Meeting 7 p.m.

SAT 27 JUN

MARCH TO COMMEMORATE Irish Hunger Strikers. Assemble Finsbury Park, N4, 12.30 p.m. Nearest tube Finsbury Park. Led by three Republican Flute Bands. Speakers at Rally inc. Sinn Fein, Irish Prisoner of War Repatriation Committee and Pan Africanist Congress.

THU 2 JUL

SOUTH LEITRIM Soviet of the 1930s a talk given by Margaret Gralton for the Irish in Britain History Group, 7.30 p.m. at Camden Irish Centre, Murray St, NW1. Admission free.

SAT 4 JUL

DON'T LET LONDON GO TO PIECES! Planning and The Future of London. An event organised by the London Strategic Policy Unit for community groups and councillors to discuss the strategic planning issues facing Londoners, and how to tackle them. 10am-2pm. St Matthews Meeting Place, Brixton Hill, London SW2. For information, contact Bill Hamilton 01-633 5783.

SAT 4 JUL

LABOUR CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE Conference. Labour's Renewal — the next stage, 10.30 a.m. - 6.30 p.m. South Bank Polytechnic, London Road, London SE1. Speakers incl. David Blunkett, Sarah Benton, Robin Cook, Brian Gould, Margaret Hodge, Robin Merray, Tom Sawyer, Chris Smith. Sessions incl. Winning Next Time, Building an anti-Thatcher Majority, Thatcher's Third Term, Labour & Defence, Labour's Economic Programme, Labour & Sexual Politics, The Future of Municipal Socialism. Registration fee £2 unwaged, LCC mems £3 out of London, £5 London, £7 non mems. Further details from Ken Hulme, LCC Organising Secretary, 9 Poland Street, London W1. 01-734 9520.

25-27 SEP

YORK UNIVERSITY — British Sociological Association Medical Sociology Conference. Papers and workshops in the sociology of health and illness. Plenary Speaker Professor Aaron Cicourel. Title: Medical diagnostic reasoning as cognitive, cultural and linguistic constructions. Details from Hilary Homans, Bristol Polytechnic. Tel. 0272 741251, ext. 33.

CONFERENCE

LONDON COMMUNITY BUSINESS CONFERENCE. 15-16 July, Greenwich. How Much Business can Communities Control. MPs Panel; workshops; launch of Community Business London. Boat trip. Social. Creche. Disabled access. £50 & £35. Details: Trevor Watling, LVSC, 68 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JR. 01-388 0241.

NEITHER MILTON NOR KEYNES. CSE Conference Sheffield Polytechnic, 10-12 July. Plenaries on Pacific Rim and Post-Elections Reflections. Wide range of workshops: Thatcherism Mark III, Politics & Technology, Local Economic Intervention and much more. Details: Conference Socialist Economists, 25 Horsell Road, London N5. 01-607 9615.

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BACKCHAT

OUT TO LUNCH

Nail the flag

Andrew Lumsden *in San Francisco*

I DON'T KNOW why people don't widen the metaphors of political discussion. High on the grass that other people are smoking, seated in a window looking up at a full moon and at the Sutro television mast which looms over San Francisco like a smaller Eiffel Tower, I think of England — so far away it might as well, dwindled and remote, be a distant galaxy. I ask aloud (no one paying attention, that's the weed for you) why we don't sometimes borrow from astronomy and talk of Red Shift and Blue Shift. It's a right old Blue Shift the British Isles are in right now.

Objects are nearer when they're in Blue Shift. Well, no one can deny that Mrs T couldn't have brought the UK closer up alongside the Republican Right in Washington if she'd unhooked the old country from the seabed, towed it across land and water into Pennsylvania Avenue and parked it in Ronnie's rose garden.

The next day. What a muddled train of thought. I don't smoke the sweet leaf because it gives me a headache and I don't take coke, not that any's been on offer, because it must be the only bad habit I've never had and just one more would surely be the death of me. But when those neat little pipes are circulating in a room and every American has a satisfied smile like so many caterpillars with hookahs on mushrooms, you can't help getting off on the atmopshere.

Bushy-tailed and wide-eyed once more this morning, I do deduce that it's the flags in rainbow colours which got me hallucinating about the Red and the Blue. On poles sticking out of apartment windows, and sometimes in the form of a rainbow-coloured windsock rather than a flag, the rainbow is all set to be the officially recognised flag of the lesbian and gay movement at an international convention of vexillologists (flag nuts) here in October.

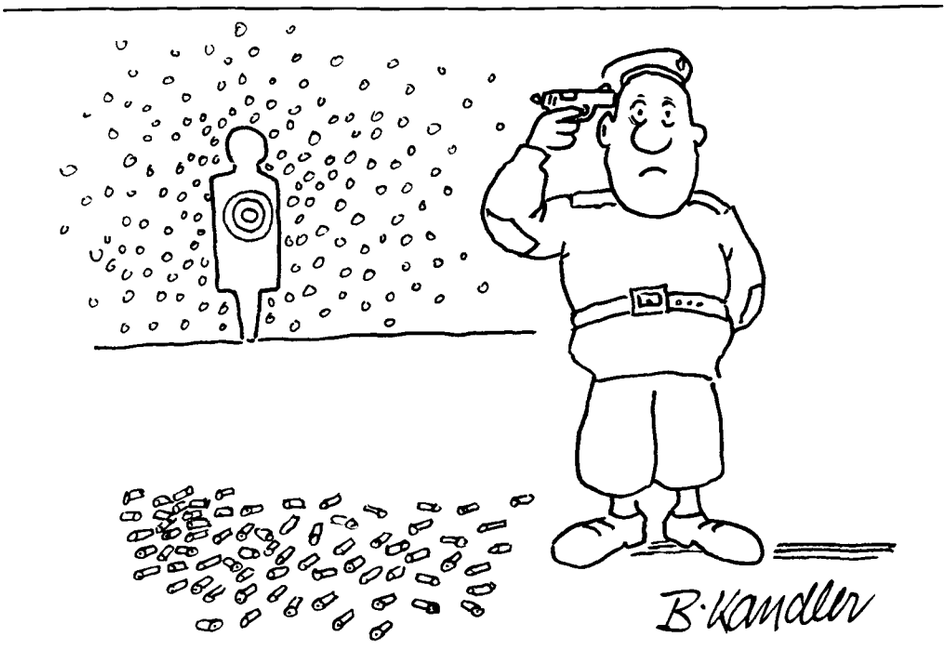
Expect to see them scattered about the annual Lesbian and Gay Cavort through London this 27 June, which I trust every *NS* reader will be on, heterosexuals (in addition to those in the police force, who always attend) being especially welcome this year. No, the flags have nothing to do with Democratic vice-presidential candidate Rev. Jesse Jackson's 'rainbow coalition', except that they are meant to express the ethnic and gender and indeed trans-gender spectrum of the ten per cent.

Lordy, but I'm having a good time, as the stores pile up on the San Francisco quayside for my expedition to bring you a Constitution: The pinnace *Walter Bagehot* is dressed aft to stern in the flags of all the constituent bits and cities of the UK and the actual crate marked *British Constitution — Fragile* is guarded day and night by Supreme Court justices. The media are going mad with anticipation.

More in my next. Meanwhile, I've had my *bon voyage* party, a sedate little affair (to begin with) in the 'loft' of a celebrity architect. I don't know what those yuppy 'lofts' in New York that we're always reading about are like, but this one is a seemingly endless room which begins, sternly, as an architectural practice complete with draftspersons' boards and plans and elevations and terminates in a bedroom.

The invitations being for two p.m. on a Sunday afternoon, the sun beamed through the windows, the California wine circulated in those vast containers the supermarkets provide and the caterpillars contentedly climbed upon their mushrooms to gaze down benignly on your correspondent Alice. And then they all went to wage war on the graffiti artists. A rock/pop shop ('The best 10 inches in San Francisco') shares the building with Phillip, our top-architect host, and its teeny customers are forever spray-painting the communal white stairwell, forcing Phillip to redecorate every three months. For four hours my farewell party obliterated *Madonna* and *Prince* and naughty epithets with MOZART and BRAHMS and SCHONBERG (cries of 'Where does the umlaut go?') and VITA SACKVILLE-WEST ('Trouble with Kevin,' said his lover, 'is he only cares for hyphenated English lesbians.')

'Gee, terrific!' breathed the teenies the next day. □



FIRST PERSON

Eve's revenge

Loretta Loach

'HELLO, IS THAT the Chinese takeaway?' 'No it's Spare *Rib*, a women's liberation magazine.' 'Oh! Sorry, wrong number.' Whoever put the 's' on the end of Rib in the telephone book certainly has a lot to answer for. So does that horny half-wit who used to practise his unseemly pillow talk on those unlucky enough to pick up the phone to him. Still, it made you laugh; it was often light relief from the heightened hysteria of a production week when sisterhood was beginning to get shabby and tempers were starting to crack.

The rhythm was so unpredictable at *Spare Rib*; it would be quiet and still, then moving and still again all within a moment. It was as if the magazine had a life separate and apart from the collective who ran it. In a sense, of course, it did and does. Never having belonged to one individual, political faction or current, it passes between the conflicting demands of them all. Fifteen years old this week, it is history's product in the sense that, unlike other magazines, it is more than a package completed for pure consumption: it is a vehicle for struggle and change. The secret of *Spare Rib*'s present identity lies in the knowledge of its past.

Beginning as an alternative news magazine, it moved from the shadow of the underground era in 1972 to become, several years later, the body and soul of the women's movement. 'Instead of seeing ourselves in a world set apart,' said founder member, Marsha Rowe, 'we were beginning to connect with the lives of other women. It was part of a broadening out of our political awareness.' But the period of gentle twilight, before the onset of the angry years, produced a curious editorial mixture. Many men believed the magazine should address them so they were given a palliative to make them feel okay. DJ John Peel wrote about the agony and the ecstasy of judging beauty contests, footballer George Best was interviewed about why he kisses the girls and makes 'em cry and, just to remind us that men have muscle, there was an article in praise of boxing.

This was also a time when womanhood as distinct from femininity was considered unproblematic for feminists. The proud

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universalism of early sisterhood allowed some odd balls into its net. Imelda Marcos for one. She was described in an early issue as a 'steel butterfly' who has 'charm, beauty, a singing voice and a talent for organising and a resistance which has made her withstand seven years of constant criticism as first lady'.

You wouldn't expect to see such a profile in today's *Spare Rib*, but it would undoubtedly find favour with one variety of feminism which now exists. Politics has been transfigured by Thatcherism and different, unexpected patterns have evolved. Feminism is not containable within a single category any more: there are feminisms of the right, centre and left; race, class and sexuality differences have dented the spirit of unity which propelled the movement forward in the 1970s. *Spare Rib* has unevenly steered its way through this confusion, not always coherently or professionally it is true. But it has taken the hopes that have risen and crumbled for one generation and extended and restored them for the next. 'Time the destroyer is time the preserver,' said Eliot and the magazine certainly has a timeless quality. This might be the reason weary founders of the women's movement don't read it any more. But the staple themes of health, sexuality and culture are all there just like they were when women's liberation was added to the title in 1977. The circulation hasn't changed much either. There was a brief time when a belief in the unstoppable tide of feminism carried *Spare Rib* sales to a giddy 30,000. But over the years it averages out at a figure between 20 and 25,000.

The most remarkable thing is that *Spare Rib* has changed, developed and regressed through disunity and contradiction. It has survived some of the most absurd and the most serious political challenges of the 1980s. In a climate of post this and post that, it has kept faith with an idea and, through a mixture of strength and submission, has created a unity out of difference.

I left *Spare Rib* and many of my hopes and aspirations I left with it. It never gave me a sense of wellbeing, wealth or security, but it did give me moments of meaning and excitement. Sometimes I felt its trials and difficulties were breaking up the very ground beneath me, but I always found some point, some standard of sanity on a bus or in a tube train; it was the worn and ragged rock of experience. □

WINE

A Hungary look

Stephen Brook

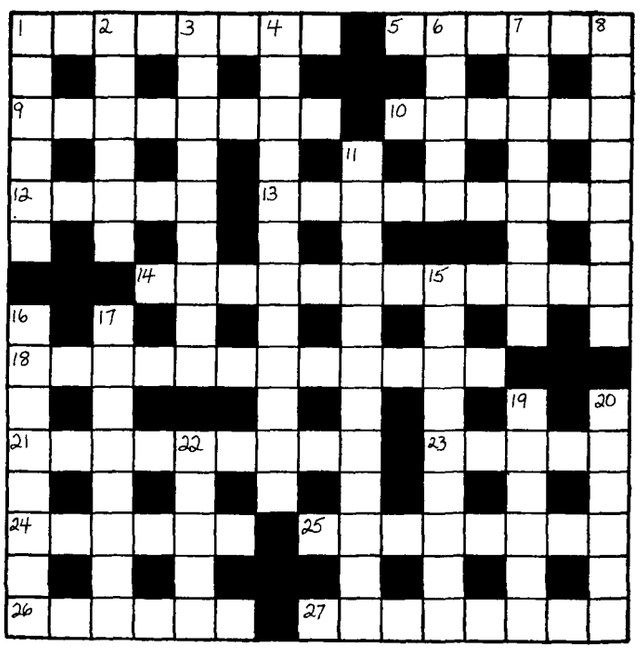
EARLIER THIS YEAR I braved the March blizzards of central Europe and took myself around most of the Hungarian wine regions. It proved an instructive tour. Although the Hungarian wine industry is dominated by state farms and cooperatives, a surprising proportion of vineyards remain in private hands. However, hardly any of the wine made by private proprietors is marketed, since the great majority of them simply sell their grapes or wine directly to those larger organisations. Few private owners have access to bottling machines or distribution networks, though some do sell their wines to local restaurants.

Consequently the range of wines available from any one region can be limited. In western Hungary, the Sopron district borders the Austrian wine region of the Burgenland, where thousands of smallholders will each offer up to 30 different wines, reflecting variations in grape variety, vintage and sugar content. The Hungarians, producing in bulk at a handful of very large wineries, cannot begin to match such choice. For range and choice they substitute consistency, which is more important than individual flair when your principal function is to supply the domestic market in the form of supermarket shoppers, and an export market dominated by the USSR.

The Hungarians do, nonetheless, produce wines of real distinction. Most of these come from native white grape varieties such as Harslevelu and Furmint; others, such as Kekfrankos, Oporto and Welschriesling, are made from varieties that may have originated in other parts of central Europe but have adapted well to Hungarian soils. Some of the great noble varieties of France and Germany produce excellent wines here. Traminers throughout the country, Cabernet Franc and Merlot from Villany and Cabernet Sauvignon from Hajos can be remarkably rich and delicious. Imported white varieties such as Riesling and Chardonnay (which I suspect is simply Pinot

Weekend Crossword 1562

£3 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1562, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8BA, by first post 14 July.



Name_____

Address_____

ACROSS

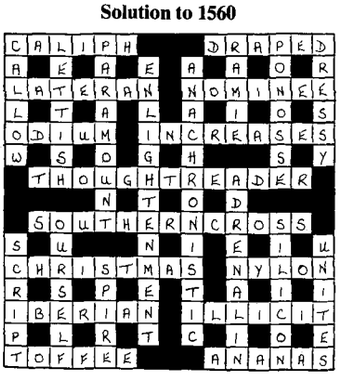
1. State of wedlock in which many go crazy after a short time (8)
5. Which people go with soldiers and are not women of virtue? (6)
9. Turning back in error set free (8)
10. Woman who is novelist and artist (6)
12. Reclining with youth in heather (5)
13. Submitting as a translation (9)
14. Secretary gives dissipated stranger hope (12)
18. Defences provided for girl in special garment (12)
21. The one in play before calls (9)
23. Stone used in an entrance (5)
24. Underwear left enclosing a chaste woman (6)
25. Small areas discovered by a woman in a big city (8)
26. Courses taken when one woman is followed by others (6)
27. Ring madly and wait outside for the fish (8)

DOWN

1. Miss going right into a tree (6)
2. Rhyming fool (6)
3. Silk mainly keeps a man sober (9)
4. Give the meaning wrongly as 'something wet flowed over the roofing material' (12)
6. It is almost paradise so it is an effort to move (5)
7. Third leg broken, a sign that there is danger (3,5)
8. Shocks when an oval body rises in the firmament (8)
11. Grant thinker turns into man of action (6,6)
15. After a party dole out flattery (9)
16. Shaken dice have succeeded (8)
17. Is right up among the nuisances but perseveres (8)
19. Ring in which there is fighting about a woman (6)
20. River which is the opposite of OK to the sea (6)
22. A woman is without time to escape (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1560



Prizewinners to 1560

A. Whittington
(Sheffield)

Jack Corrigan
(Stoneyburn, W. Lothian)

D. Dixon
(Weymouth)

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Blanc) rarely produce impressive wines in my experience. On the other hand, Pinot Gris flourishes under the Hungarian name of Szurkebarat.

If there is a single feature that characterises Hungarian wines, it is their high extract, which is most simply translated as density and intensity of flavour. The whites in particular, often high in alcohol as well as in extract, are also often rich and spicy. The reds tend to be more one-dimensional, if only because the large state wineries and coops, dealing in bulk production, cannot permit themselves the variables, especially of oak ageing, that are commonplace in France or the New World. The raw materials emerging from the vineyards of, say, Villany or Somlo are superb in quality, but their potential is insufficiently realised; there is, as yet, no place in the Hungarian economy for the equivalent of 'boutique' wineries. Hungarians and their thirsty clients in Russia and East Germany want wines that are cheap and reliable. The few wineries that produce small lots of stylishly made wine clearly do so with an eye more on Western hard currency than on roubles.

The Western market, at least that portion of it found in Britain, is not well served. I have tasted just about everything in a bottle from Hungary over recent weeks and there were some sour moments. Among the duds are two Chardonnays; moreover, such typically Hungarian varieties as Keknyelu, Ezerjo, Kisburgundi, Banati Riesling, Harslevelu, Bikaver (Bull's Blood) and Szurkebarat give, in their current manifestations, only a faint notion of how fine and vigorous these wines can be. Almost every wine imported into Britain comes via Hungarovin, a vast winery just outside Budapest. Although its standards of vinification and bottling are high, it must be difficult for importers to know exactly what they are going to get after they have placed their order. This makes quality control extremely difficult; it is significant that the producer of almost every wine is stated on the label to be Hungarovin, rather than the local winery in which the stuff was actually brewed.

Fortunately there *are* some excellent Hungarian wines on the market. Safeway offer a grassy, fresh Sauvignon Blanc from Lake Balaton (£1.85) and, at the other end of the taste spectrum, is a lush, fruit-salady 1976 Badacsonyi Tramini, rich and stylish. The nonvintage Tramini from Villany is also good. Furmint is the grape that dominates the marvellous sweet wines of Tokay and it is also made into table wine. The 1981 Furmint available here is delicious, slightly oxidised (deliberately so) and a bracing accompaniment to Indian food. The best of the reds come from the Villany region. Safeway offer a 1979 Cabernet Sauvignon (£2.79) as well as a nonvintage bottling (£1.85); the 1979 is well worth the extra cost. Their Merlot (£1.85) is also a flavoury if unsubtle mouthful. Pinot Noir is also available in 1979 and nonvintage versions. Again, the vintage is far superior, though devotees of Burgundy will find no echo of Burgundian Pinot Noir in these wines. I also liked a nonvintage Cabernet Franc from Sopron, more tannic and austere than most of these reds, which tend to be strong on flavour and short on depth and character.

There is no doubt that Hungary is capable of producing superb wines at a fair price, but too few of them have made it to Britain. Masons of Holbrook and Ashdown Wines have courageously specialised in importing unique and authentic Hungarian wines such as Harslevelu but, sadly, the bottles that have come my way have often been inferior to the same wines found in Hungary itself. Nevertheless, the best wines all offer outstanding value for money. □

Wines of Westhorpe
–for more wine value

MAGYAR MERLOT

Villany Merlot – *bestselling Merlot flavour from Southern Hungary. Top 3 star rating in recent competitive tasting of Merlots: "Good body showing nice fruit", "well made and* **fantastic** *value". Dry.* £21.20

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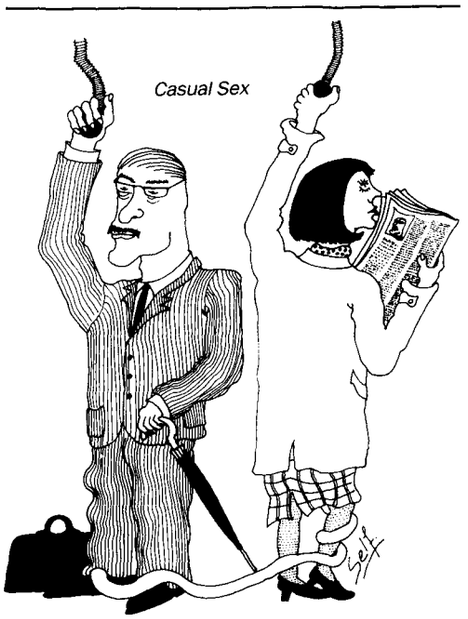

Weekend competition

No 2981 **Set by Tim Hopkins**
Could we have single acrostics based on the word ALLIANCE? Entries by 8 July.

No 2978 **Russell Lucas**
Skipping or counting rhymes which provide a socially useful sex education for our children.

Report **By Rosie Hughes**
What I'm going to say is *not very fair*, I admit it, but only those who blithely ignored dear Russell's instruction not to be vulgar got this the slightest bit right. Counting rhymes, it's true, can be quite genteel (even poor Gerald Howarth MP couldn't find 'One, two, buckle my shoe' offensive) but skipping rhymes are invariably *sordid*. Gerry Hamill's opening lines — 'Ah, youth, eschew seductive dancing/And, regarding wine . . .' — wouldn't last a second even in the playgrounds of Roedean. But ten pounds each to the winners.

He loves Mary, he loves Joan,
He rings Betty on the te-le-phone,
Lucy at a party, Polly on a spree,
Daisy at a disco — don't ask *me*!
I'm not a silly girl, I'm not a fool,
My mother taught me to keep the rule;
My mother said that if in doubt,
Tell him no and keep him out.
O - U - T spells OUT.

ALISON PRINCE

Boys have tadpoles
In their willies
'Less you want a baby
Don't be sillies

Girls have little eggs
'Bove their tummies
Boys who put their willies up
Make you mummies

Don't be bashful
Don't be bonkers
Stick a pack-a-mac
On their plonkers

WILL BELLENGER

One two three four
Mary Whitehouse went to war
She taught the girls how to love
And this is what she taught them
Heel, toe, just say no
Knee, thigh, that's too high
Tit, bum, tell your mum
Gold ring, have a fling
One two three four
Nasty boys just want more
Five six seven eight
Nice girls will always wait.

JOCK WHITESIDE

Dip, dip, dip,
Watch where you kip.
Buckets and spades
Don't give you Aids;
The ones who blubber
Forgot their rubber
So let's just see
Who's HIV.
Dip, dip, dip,
You've got IT!

NICHOLAS MURRAY

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Chess

KORCHNOI once claimed that his opening theory was ten years ahead of anyone else's. 'My, what a big mouth you have, Grand-dad!', was what we thought about that. But now it really does seem there was something in the boast since his main defences to 1. e4 — the French and the Open Ruy — are becoming increasingly popular. For anyone who likes to meet 1. e4 with 1 . . . e5 I would certainly recommend the Open Variation as a good way to get an active position with winning chances for Black. In preparing for the Praxis zonal earlier this year I couldn't find any line that keeps an advantage for White. As it happened, nobody played 1. e4 against me! But so many people play the Lopez that a desire to try the Open Variation is not likely to remain frustrated for long.

The starting point for investigation of the Open Ruy comes after the moves: **1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Nxe4 6. d4 b5 7. Bb3 d5 8. dxe5 Be6.** White's main options here are **9. c3, 9. Qe2** and **9. Nbd2.**

To aid us in our theoretical preparation we can draw on a book published this week — *The Games of the World Correspondence Chess Championships I-X*, edited by Tim Harding (Batsford, £19.95). Harding's collection was badly needed as a corrective to the idea that the correspondence fraternity are a slow-witted bunch. It's the sort of austere stuff strong players feed on nowadays: just the results and games (over 1000 of them), some with laconic notes. No human touches — for all the reader can tell the games might have been played by computers. Of course, that is going to be a problem for correspondence chess. There are bound to be some cases which realise the crazy scenario of a program playing itself at long-distance. The machines do the thinking, while the humans lick the stamps and nip down to the post-box!

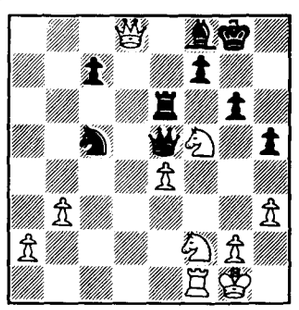
As an example of **9. c3** we have **Richardson (GB)-Estrin (USSR)** from the Xth World Correspondence Championship (1978-84):

9. c3 Bc5 10. Nbd2 0-0 11. Bc2 Nxf2! I'm convinced this is the best practical choice, though there are also interesting complications after 11 . . . f5 12. Nb3 Ba7 13. Nfd4 Nxd4 14. cxd4 f4 15. f3 Ng3! 16. hxg3 fxg3 17. Qd3! Bf5 18. Qxf5 Rxf5 19. Bxf5 Qh4 which Estrin, the 7th world correspondence champion, thought was at least OK for Black. **12. Rxf2 f6 13. exf6 Bxf2 + 14. Kxf2 Qxf6 15. Nf1** 15. Kg1 Rae8 is a major alternative. **Ne5 16. Be3 Nxf3?!** Not the most accurate. Better 16 . . . Rae8 after which I would draw your attention to this possibility: 17. Bd4 Bg4 18. Nd2 Qh6!? 19. Kg1 Nxf3 + 20. Nxf3 Qh5 21. Qd3 Bxf3 22. gxf3 Rxf3 23. Qd1 Re4 24. Kh1 Rh4 25. Qg1 Rxh2 + 26. Qxh2 Rh3 27. Qxh3 Qxh3 + and draws, which was one of the bits of secret analysis I didn't get the chance to use. **17. gxf3 Qh4 + 18. Kg1 c6 19. Bc5 Rf7 20. Qe2 Bd7 21. Re1! Rxf3 22. Qxf3 Qxe1 23. Qh5 h6 24. Qg6** and by now Black was clearly in trouble, with the White Bishops dominating (1-0, 38).

9. Qe2 has the merit of being motivated by a clear plan — Rd1 and attack the d5 pawn. However, it seems to be effectively neutralized by the treatment seen in **Sakharov-Oim, IXth Correspondence World Ch.:**

9. Qe2 Be7 10. Rd1 0-0 11. c4 bxc4 12. Bxc4 Bc5 13. Be3 Bxe3 14. Qxe3 Qb8 15. Bb3 Na5 16. Ne1 Nxb3 17. axb3 f5! Black often plays for a Queen-exchange with . . . Qb6 or . . . Qa7, but why run away from the middlegame? **18. exf6 Rxf6 19. f3** A 1977 correspondence game Prainfalk-Kuuskmaa went 19. Nf3? Bg4! 20. Rxd5 Bxf3 21. gxf3 c6 22. Rh5 Rg6 + 23. Kh1 Qf4! 0-1. **Nd6 20. Nd2 Rh6 21. Rdc1 c5! 22. Nf1 c4 23. bxc4 dxc4** and Black had a big advantage because in any ending he can manufacture a distant passed pawn on the Q-side.

So now we come to **9. Nbd2,** with which Karpov troubled Korchnoi in their 1981 match in Merano. The latest idea here is to be seen in **Tal-Korchnoi Reykjavik 1987: 9. Nbd2 Nc5 10. c3 d4 11. Bxe6 Nxe6 12. cxd4 Ncxd4 13. Ne4 Be7 14. Be3 Nf5 15. Qc2 0-0 16. Rad1 Nxe3 17. fxe3 Qc8** White has the initiative and chances for a K-side attack. But that may only be temporary. If Black can exchange major pieces he should get a very pleasant endgame. **18. h3 Rd8 19. Nh2 Rxd1 20. Qxd1 Qe8 21. Qh5 Nc5 22. Ng3 a5!** This is the new idea. Korchnoi intends to fortify his K-side with . . . Ra6-g6. **23. Nf5 Ra6 24. Ng4 Rg6 25. b3 Bd8 26. Nf2 Qc6 27. e4 Qe8** Black loses the thread. On 27 . . . Nxe4 Tal intended 28. Qd1, but the compensation is nebulous. **28. Qd1 Be7 29. Qd2 Bf8 30. Qxa5 Qxe5 31. Qxb5 Re6 32. Qb8 h5 33. Qd8 g6?** Only with this move does Black's position deteriorate to being lost. Can you find the Tal tactic? How should White continue from the diagram?



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This England

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☐ Mrs Thatcher goes in for a full wave rather than the Queen's hidden elbow technique. When she approached some supporters outside the factory, several even bowed. — *Scotsman* (Mary M. Simpson)

☐ Doctors in Aberdeen said yesterday they were puzzled by a baby boom last month when all records were broken at the city's maternity units. In one weekend there were 47 births in 48 hours, and doctors realised it was just nine months since the royal wedding. — *Daily Telegraph* (G.M. Moger)

☐ A postman confessed yesterday to putting Communist party literature in Conservative election envelopes he was delivering. 'There was no political motive, he only did it to speed up their delivery,' said Nottingham's Head Postmaster, after an inquiry. — *Daily Telegraph* (James Scott)

☐ A Bath souvenir shop is doing a record trade — selling cans of rainwater. The cans at £1.50 each are going down well especially with American tourists. The shop has sold 200 so far this year; more than any other shop in the country. — *Bristol Evening Post* (Liselotte Leschke)

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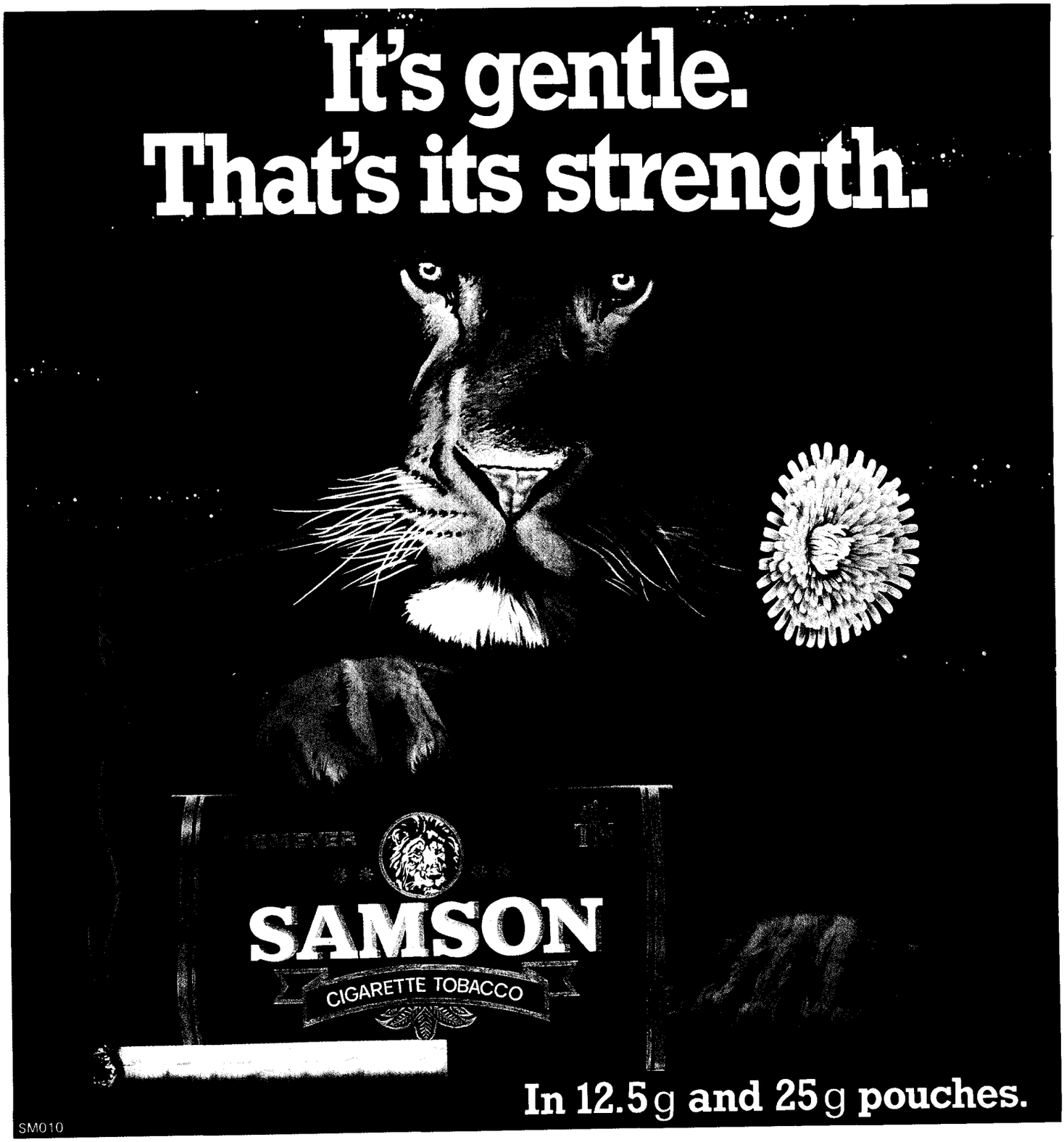

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